A special issue

The New Criterion

New York in the Eighties
a symposium

Hortense Calisher, Chuck Close,
Arlene Croce, Clement Greenberg,
Mark Helprin, Ada Louise Huxtable,
Richard Koshalek, Mimi Kramer,
Samuel Lipman, Jed Perl,
William Phillips, Alan Rich,
Larry Rivers, Barbara Rose,
William Schuman, Gerard Schwarz,
Hugo Weisgall, & Leon Wieseltier

With an introduction by Hilton Kramer

Summer 1986

$3.50

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOW REPRESENTING

RICHARD ANUSZKIEWICZ
PAUL BOWEN
CARMEN CICERO
SUSAN CRILE
ROBERT DE NIRO
KATHLEEN FERGUSON
IRVING KRIESBERG
MARY NEWCOMB
ANNE POOR
PAUL RESIKA
REEVE SCHLEY
PETER STEVENS
SELINA TRIEFF
JOAN THORNE
ROBERT WHITE
THE ESTATE OF SEYMOUR FOGEL

GRAHAM *MODERN*

1014 MADISON AVENUE AT 78TH
NEW YORK CITY
(212) 535-5767

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In Honor of John Chamberlain

at the occasion of his retrospective exhibition
at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles
June 27–September 12

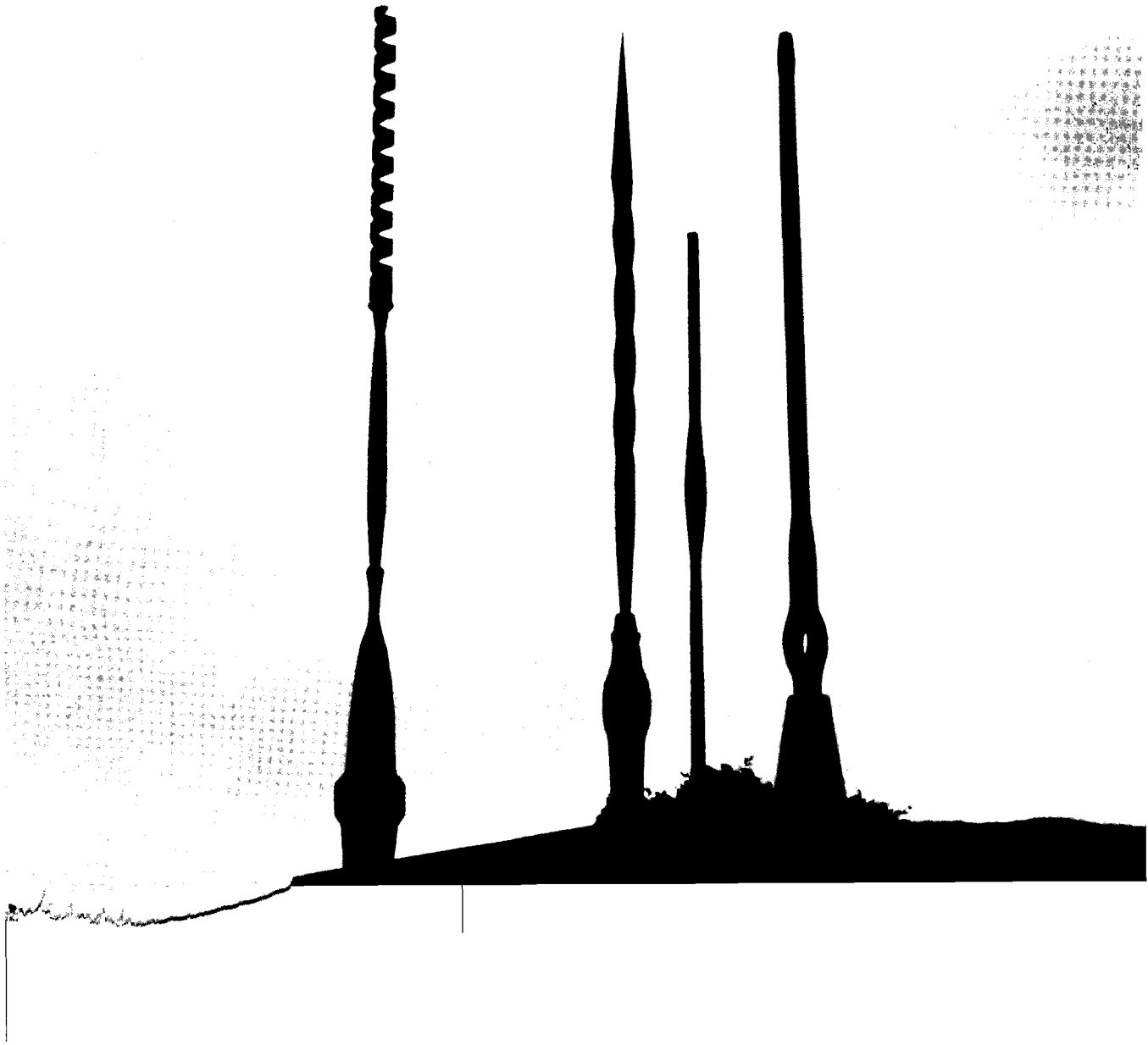
Tony Berlant

New Work
September 20–October 18

XAVIER FOURCADE INC.
36 East 75th Street New York, New York 10021 212 535-3980

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Beverly Pepper—A 20 Year Survey will be shown at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo from September 12th to November 2nd. This retrospective will also be shown at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Columbus Museum of Art, and the Brooklyn Museum. Illustrated: *Central Park Plaza*, 1983, steel, 27 ft. high, base 10×10 ft. Beverly Pepper is represented by the **André Emmerich Gallery** at 41 East 57th Street, New York.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The New Criterion *Special Issue*

Editor *Hilton Kramer*
Publisher *Samuel Lipman*
Managing Editor *Erich Eichman*
Assistant Managing Editor *Eva Szent-Miklosy*
Poetry Editor *Robert Richman*
Office Manager *Elizabeth Vickery*
Editorial Intern *Alexandra Siegel*

The New Criterion is published monthly except July and August by The Foundation for Cultural Review, Inc., 850 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10019. Publication Number ISSN 0734-0222. Summer 1986. Subscription rates: $27 for one year, $50 for two. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: send changes of address to 850 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10019. Copyright © 1986 by The Foundation for Cultural Review, Inc. Distributed in England by Periodicals in Particular, 1 Prince of Wales Passage, 117 Hampstead Road, London, NW1. Editorial/business correspondence should be addressed to The New Criterion, 850 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10019. (212) 247-6980. Notice of nonreceipt of an issue must be sent to the Office Manager within three months of its date.
Advertising representative: Kate Shanley, 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10175. (718) 729-6221.

The New Criterion is designed by Alvin and James Eisenman and printed by the Eastern Press of New Haven, Connecticut.

Forthcoming in the fall issues of *The New Criterion*

Clement Greenberg in the Forties *by Hilton Kramer*
The pupils of Clara Schumann *by Samuel Lipman*
Killing Moonlight: the Futurists in Venice *by W. S. Di Piero*
Elias Canetti *by Roger Kimball*
The School of Paris revisited *by Jed Perl*
In search of J. D. Salinger *by Bruce Bawer*
Walter Benjamin's "Moscow Diary" *by René Wellek*
The poetry of Robert Bly *by Robert Richman*
Theodore Dreiser *by Joseph Epstein*
Vulgarity, novelty, & politics in contemporary art *by Charles W. Millard*
New poems *by Florence Grossman, Peter Filkins, Patricia Clark*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pierre matisse gallery

in new york since 1932 at 41 east 57

balthus *1938 · 39 · 49 · 57 · 62 · 67 · 77*

butler *1959 · 62 · 73*

calder *1934 · 36 · 37 · 40 · 41 · 42 · 43*

chagall *1941 · 42 · 44 · 45 · 46 · 47 · 48 · 68 · 68 · 69 · 72 · 73 · 75 · 79 · 81 · 82*

chirico *1935 · 40*

dubuffet *1947 · 47 · 47 · 48 · 50 · 51 · 52 · 54 · 56 · 58 · 59 · 78*

giacometti *1948 · 50 · 58 · 61 · 64*

lam *1942 · 44 · 45 · 48 · 50 · 82*

mac iver *1940 · 44 · 49 · 56 · 61 · 66 · 70 · 81*

matta *1942 · 44 · 45 · 46 · 47*

millares *1965 · 74*

miró *1932 · 33 · 35 · 36 · 38 · 39 · 40 · 41 · 42 · 44 · 45 · 45 · 47 · 48 · 49 · 50 · 51 · 51 ·*
1953 · 56 · 58 · 59 · 61 · 63 · 65 · 67 · 70 · 72 · 73 · 73 · 75 · 76 · 76 · 78 · 80 · 83 · 85

riopelle *1954 · 56 · 69 · 74 · 74 · 77 · 85*

roszak *1962 · 74*

rouan *1976 · 82 · 84*

rouault *1933 · 37 · 39 · 47*

saura *1961 · 64 · 71*

tanguy *1939 · 42 · 43 · 45 · 46 · 50 · 63*

zao wou-ki *1980 · 86*

major one-man exhibitions since 1932

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New York in the Eighties
introduction by Hilton Kramer

New York is not yet, by any means, a Renaissance Florence, but the history of art in America is largely a history of its life. Art has grown here as the city has grown. To say that it has grown by the proverbial leaps and bounds is to make a very mild statement. Progress started late, but when it came there was no stopping it.
—Royal Cortissoz, in "New York as an Art Centre," in his book *American Artists,* 1923.

The feeling that if you have grasped an idea you can realize it, instead of beating your head against the bars of prejudice and prestige, is most invigorating. There is a big work to be done here and we should, in a sense, take a very leading position. Money, I think, would come in plenty, but more than that, real power to shape things and real consideration. It's a quite different spirit to that of England; the artists admire one another too much perhaps, but how much better that is than not enough . . . . There is going to be an immense boom here in art—everything is shaping and arranging itself for it and I am regarded as the person who can give the direction to it in lots of ways . . . . it is the bigness of the job, the élan *and real confidence in the future that fascinate me and this climate is exhilarating, no doubt.*
—Roger Fry, in a letter from New York in 1905.

New York in the 1980s is, culturally and otherwise, a vastly different city from the one that Royal Cortissoz was writing about in the aftermath of the First World War or the one that Roger Fry knew in 1905. For that matter, it is in many respects a vastly different city from the one that I myself encountered when I first came to live here in 1950. Yet the perspectives afforded by the observations I have quoted above may be useful as a way of approaching the subject of this symposium—New York as a cultural capital in the 1980s. Certain things have not changed, after all. It can still be said of New York that "Art has grown here as the city has grown." The "immense boom" in art which Fry shrewdly envisioned in 1905 is still very much with us, and on a scale that even Fry could scarcely have imagined possible. Nor, incidentally, was Fry the last figure of the London art world to be made to feel that he should take "a very leading position" in this historic development. Eight decades later Fry's successor at the Metropolitan Museum of Art is, like Fry, an Englishman—and so are the chief art critic of *The New York Times* and the music critic for *The New Yorker.* Likewise, Fry's candid reference to money, like the evident pleasure he took in the prospect of "real power to shape things," may

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

serve as a salutary reminder that ambitions of this sort—ambitions involving money and power and the renown that accompanies them—are not a phenomenon new to the 1980s. They have long been an integral part of what gives a cosmopolitan culture its special dynamism, and we have only to reside for a time in places where such ambitions are either unknown or under suspension to appreciate the real difference they can sometimes make in creating the conditions in which the arts—and life itself—may prosper.

That the current phase of the city's growth is not to everyone's taste—that, in fact, it is for many serious observers a source of mounting dismay and apprehension—is not exactly news. One hears complaints about it in every quarter, and these complaints are amply reflected in some of the contributions to the present symposium. And while some of these complaints are surely legitimate and point to something real, others may strike us as little more than expressions of nostalgia for a world that never was, nor could be. At no time in the last thirty or forty years was it ever cheap or easy for writers and artists to live in New York. When I first came to live in Greenwich Village nearly forty years ago, I found New York frightfully expensive and opportunities for a decent livelihood almost nonexistent. One knew that one was living on the edge, with virtually nothing to fall back on, but it was on that edge—or so it seemed to the minds one most admired—that life was worth living. One tends to forget how much in the way of comfort and amenity artists and writers were willing to give up in order to live here even in the so-called good old days when rents were undeniably cheaper and the city was a far safer and cleaner place than it now is. In this respect, William Phillips's description of the way young writers once lived in those cold-water flats, with bathtubs in the kitchen and toilets in the hall, affords us another useful perspective on the present situation. In my own generation, which is younger than that of the writers he cites, living in such a style—or in some makeshift equivalent—was still something of a norm for those entering upon the life of art, and it was assumed as a matter of course that it would be many years before anything better would be within one's reach—if, indeed, it would ever be.

What has changed, of course, is not only the price of real estate but an entire attitude toward life. It is my impression, anyway, that the appeals of the bohemian life had begun to lose their allure for artists and writers as soon as the prospect of some real alternative made itself felt on a significant scale. It was the emergence of this alternative in the 1950s which made that decade an important turning point in the history of American cultural life. Why such an alternative emerged at that historical moment is a long story, to be sure—and one that has yet to be told. It certainly had a lot to do with the international acclaim that was lavished on the painters of the New York School in the course of that decade. It had something to do, too, with the growing recognition that the New York City Ballet was the greatest thing of its kind in the world. In other fields as well—music is a case in point—there were important developments which made it possible, in some cases for the first time, for Americans to believe that a dedicated career in the arts no longer necessarily entailed a vow to poverty and obscurity.

What made the difference, in other words, was the possibility of "success"—a concept which, being relative, means very different things to different people but which nonetheless has the enduring characteristic of acting as a spur to serious minds. What one can say about this concept of "success" with a fair degree of confidence is that it always entails two things: the wish to achieve a certain recognition for one's achievements, and the hope of improving one's lot in life. We are not speaking here of the dream of vast riches or fantasies of a runaway media celebrity—those came later and have taken their toll—but of something more modest and, I think, more legitimate. As soon as it was generally perceived that "success" in this earlier sense lay within the realm of possibil-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ity for more and more talents in many fields, then the traditional appeals of bohemian life were doomed to recede, and the life of the arts was established on a less marginal basis. The whole notion of a career in the arts was overtaken by a sense of rising expectations. And nowhere was this truer than among those artists who made it their business to be in New York, where expectations tended to be higher and opportunities more compelling than elsewhere.

Given these rising expectations and opportunities, it was inevitable that the arts would now attract a great many people who in an earlier period would not have considered—or been allowed to consider—a career in such a difficult and risky realm of endeavor. If this has meant—as I believe it has—a marked increase in the number of aspirants who are attracted to the arts primarily as a means of acquiring money and glory, we need to remember that this is an increase in numbers only. The type itself has long been familiar to artistic communities everywhere—and, for that matter, it is not unknown to other walks of life. As New York has more of everything, it was bound to have more than its share of such types, but along with their increase there has also been a parallel increase—or such is my impression—in the number of aspirants who remain dedicated to the life of art and quite as willing as their predecessors were to endure whatever hardships they have to face for the sake of what matters most to them: their art.

Since it was New York that long harbored the largest as well as the liveliest bohemian milieu in the United States, the progressive diminution of that milieu from the Fifties onward has naturally been felt more acutely and lamented more publicly here than anywhere else. And as the changes that have followed in the wake of this development have been unequal in their effects, bringing prosperity and fame to some and added hardship to others, the impulse to assign blame has naturally been widespread. Some attribute the causes of our present woes—insofar as they see them as woes—to the real-estate developers. Others arraign the media, and still others the public itself. Fashion is often cited as the principal evil, art dealers are denounced for their venality, arts administrators decried for their lack of vision and courage, and critics impugned on grounds of integrity as well as intelligence and taste. Some even condemn the government as primarily responsible for what ails the arts, while others invoke the capitalist system as the central cause—as if any other system in this century has offered greater opportunity or freedom for the arts to flourish on their own terms. Rarely, if ever, mentioned as a major factor in the life of the arts today is the artist—and what the artist does, or does not do, in his art. We tend to treat the artist as a figure who is acted upon in the cultural arena, rather than as its principal actor—which is very odd when we know very well that it is what the artist does, or fails to do, in his work that creates the fundamental conditions of our cultural life.

What is therefore essential to understand about the change which has overtaken the life of the arts in New York is that it was achieved, first of all, as a result of what certain artists accomplished in their work. If they had not put New York on the cultural map—and kept it there—none of our present problems would exist for artists, and none of the opportunities either. It was the art—and the recognition duly accorded to the art—which caused money and attention to be lavished upon it, and not the presence of money or the media that caused the art to be created. What we are talking about are the problems that follow from a certain kind of success, not the problems of failure—which are of another order altogether.

The question of the moment is: has New York's success somehow so altered the way the arts here are created and perceived and supported that they are now in danger of sliding into a period of decline? Many people, for good reasons and for bad, now fear that this might be the case. New York has undoubtedly changed, and so has the rest of the country in relation to it—in part, anyway, as a result of standards and opportuni-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ties set in New York. It is in the hope of exploring the nature and the implications of these changes—both in New York and elsewhere—that the editors of *The New Criterion* have organized the present symposium. For this project we have turned to those who are most directly involved in the creation, the criticism, the performance, and the organization of the arts. To a select group of these figures we have sent the statement and questions which follow below, inviting them to reply to the issues they deem most paramount at the present time. We are far from agreeing with every statement made in this symposium, but unanimity of opinion was not our purpose. What we set out to achieve was an informed and wide-ranging discussion of the problems which are now thought to beset us—problems which lie as much in the realm of opinion and judgment as in the realm of creation itself—and this we believe we have accomplished.

The statement and questions submitted to the symposiasts are the following:

> It has been accepted for several decades now that New York is the artistic capital of the Western world, and that it will remain so in the foreseeable future. In all questions having to do with high culture, whether as a creative enterprise, as an object of critical scrutiny, or as an established institution, New York in the last years of the 1980s continues to occupy a place of unequalled leadership. Yet this position of dominance, while rarely questioned as a general proposition, no longer seems quite what it was even a few years ago. Changes in the city's economy, as well as changes in the arts and in the pattern of patronage of the arts, have lately led to the speculation that New York's status as a cultural capital may actually be undergoing a significant shift.
>
> It is no secret, for example, that young artists and intellectuals in every field find it more and more difficult to survive the high costs of living in New York, and it remains something of a mystery that so many aspiring talents nonetheless manage to establish themselves here. In certain fields, moreover, New York is now seen to import as much as it exports in culture. Our theater has increasingly become a dependency on the theater of London as well as on regional theater in the United States. In the visual arts the heralded new talents are today as likely to come from Germany, England, and Italy as from New York. In architecture, New York seems to garner more in the way of controversy than of first-rate achievement. The academy has for many years seemed to provide a more secure environment than New York for aspiring novelists, poets, and critics. In musical performance, there is at present little difference between what goes on in New York and what goes on elsewhere; in composition, the argument is being made that New York no longer leads in the avant-garde. And so it seems to go in many fields. The way patronage is both perceived and acted upon now seems to focus as much on Washington as on New York institutions, and this too has led to speculation that New York's position of dominance has been seriously undermined. The role of television as a medium in which reputations are made has likewise raised questions about the future of New York as the place where an artist or a writer must establish his critical renown. The issue that emerges as the result of these observations is whether such shifts pose a threat to New York's position as an artistic capital or, on the contrary, indicate only the kind of changes that regularly occur in the cosmopolitan cultural life for which New York is now universally famous.
>
> *The New Criterion* is soliciting responses from a group of artists, writers, and cultural leaders in order to ascertain what the state of the arts and letters in New York City is in the 1980s, and what the future may hold. Specifically, we would like your view on the questions which appear on the next page. Because these questions move from the particular to the general, we hope that your answer might include consideration of your own field or fields of interest, and then might go on to sketch your opinions on the broader matters of New York's present and future position. Your answer may, of course, include comments on any or all of the questions we are asking.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1. In your field, does New York lead now, and will it continue to lead?

2. In your field, is the new generation of leaders in New York or elsewhere?

3. How interested are you in what goes on in your field outside the geographical area where you work?

4. What are the benefits and costs of being an artist or a writer in New York?

5. If you now live in New York, is there anywhere else, in this country or abroad, where you would rather work?

6. If you live outside New York, how important for your work is coming to New York, and how important is having your work noticed in New York?

7. Is New York's perceived position of leadership real, or is it merely a matter of the concentration of media attention?

8. How has the cultural vitality of New York changed over the last two decades?

9. To what extent are social and economic conditions responsible for the change?

10. Can any decline of New York's central position in America's cultural life be seen as part of a general decline?

11. Are there thriving regional cultures in America, or are they merely smaller-scale replicas of what New York has been doing, and still does, better?

12. Were New York to lose its position of leadership, what would be the effect of this loss on American culture as a whole?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Contemporary Artists

Dan Christensen

John Adams Griefen

Darryl Hughto

Andrews Kelly

Clifford Ross

Susan Roth

Paul Weingarten

Estate of Horacio Torres

Kikuo Saito

Salander-O'Reilly Galleries, Inc.

22 East 80 Street New York, NY 10021 Tel (212) 879-6606

Gallery hours: Mon-Fri, 10 to 5:30

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hortense Calisher

Hortense Calisher was born in New York City in 1911. Her first book, a collection of short stories called In the Absence of Angels, *was published in 1951. Her most recent novel,* The Bobby-Soxer, *was published by Doubleday in February. Among her many other books are* The New Yorkers, Standard Dreaming, On Keeping Women, *and* Mysteries of Motion. *Her autobiography, entitled* Herself, *was published in 1972. Hortense Calisher is the president of American PEN and a member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. Her essay on the novels of Barbara Pym appeared in the inaugural issue of* The New Criterion *in September, 1982.*

I don't really know what "high" culture is, although one may understand the term well enough to dislike it. Did the phrase originate in visual-arts lingo—the kind of good-will gallery talk heard at any "important" show, both from those who can afford to buy "the best," and those who see themselves as acquiring culture for free by merely thinking on it? Users of the phrase do not pose "low" culture as its opposite. Instead they say "pop"—as in "the perceived distance between what we call high culture and popular culture"—(*The New York Times,* Arts and Leisure Section, "Photography View," April 6, 1986). Media of course love the phrase for its convenience, akin to those well-intentioned receptacles the city once affixed at street corners, as an experimentally "good" design that would accept trash. Actually the "stone" composition was not that entertaining to the eye, and eroded quickly. So does snobbery masking as social analysis.

Literature does not work that way, nor great cities either. Aristocracy—of wealth, lineage, position—has of course had a part in all the arts down the ages, and some of this must be equated with excellence—if one that eventually trickles out to the mob. But the division of culture into "high"—and let's say in a gentler way that will not offend the egalitarians: "Not high"—has an even nobler, if narrower deer park in mind. Reach then for analogy to the nineteenth century, an era whose genial to passionate desire for social and intellectual improvement, vying with its own hypocrisy, often fought that battle on the playing fields of literature. In the work, say, of Hugo, Dickens, and even Flaubert, the mob, and the mob's taste or anti-taste, often took the star roles. Indeed the metaphysic of those writers, where fed by the vast illiteracy of the streets, often did better than when it reached for monument. That said, one has to recognize that the arts and the intellect do move by any route possible, and dogma is one of them. But there any logical connection between a city and its culture comes to full stop. A city has no choice.

A great city is a confluence. It's no accident that so many are either on rivers—the Thames, the Hudson, the Seine, the Neva—or else look out to sea. A city may legislate its social welfare, its amenities, and even its architecture, but not the divisions in its culture, which flows like its other river, subject to every surface change and fed by those underground. As a native-born denizen of New York, I hope never to be able to define completely what my culture is. Part of my dowry from the city, and of my citizenship there, is that I know better than to try.

Therefore this preamble, since, answering your questionnaire, I must deal with presumptions it appears to take for granted and I do not. Formal of me, eh? But how formal its questions are!

In your field . . . Does a writer of books like mine have a field? Seriocomic? Tragedienne?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Autodidact? Apolitical? Partisan? Urban-provincial? Space fellow traveller? Subcutaneous semioticist?

Does New York lead in that field and will it continue to?

My field is the world. Or—New York has taught me that it should be, though perhaps any heath can do that. Still, New York collects the world for me, in the city way. In my youth this affect-effect was deep; now it is shallower, but that is not the city; that is me, and the cause is not in the changes in the city, whatever those may be, but in what time and experience bring to anyone. I am sure that for youth here, New York is still

"New York's magnetism has always gone brutally hand in hand with its economy, and especially so for the young, in the arts or not. In the Great Depression, flats went for a song, yet we still could not pay for them. Yet we sang."

the leader, whether or not that leadership can be clocked demographically—a likelihood it is possible to deny. As with any city, New York's magnetism has always gone brutally hand in hand with its economy, and especially so for the young, in the arts or not. In the Great Depression, flats went for a song, yet we still could not pay for them. Yet we sang.

Is the new generation of writers in New York or elsewhere?

When I was growing up as a writer, the generation just past or on the way there included Faulkner, Dreiser, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Katherine Anne Porter, et al.—of course New Yorkers all? That is, their publishers were more usually from there. In my own time, the New York Jews emerged from our own boroughs—I among them—yet if we were more New York than otherwise is arguable. Some of us had read the nineteenth-century Russians quite deeply—as had a "Chicago" writer born in Montreal, named Bellow; some preferred Kafka and some returned to the Jewish folklore—and all of them threaded their minds in and out of past and current writers as they could. Writers, even when native to a city, are always from elsewhere. The city in turn collects them, professionally or personally, but is never their whole story.

How interested am I in what goes on in my "field" outside the geographical area where I work?

I read writers of every nation (and of every part of my nation) as languages and availability permit. But what say you to Joyce, to Dostoevsky, Céline, Mann, Brecht, Beckett, and all the international host—what "area" are they? Reading was international before I was born—and the time lag due to translation grows ever less. Half of present-day freshmen buffs must have read *One Hundred Years of Solitude*; the other half are converging toward Robbe-Grillet, Foucault, and Lévi-Strauss, or their derivations. Would a writer, even if she came from Finisterre, do less?

What are the benefits . . . and costs . . . of being in New York?

The benefits to writers, as to any New Yorker, are in an exposure to every human activity and accomplishment in macrocosm. Some writers thrive on that, born to it or not; what is offered can broaden their own humanity, their sympathy for the mass or for the lonely, their engagement with the droll or the vicious, or their sense of living at the heights, the depths, or the middle. Others can be ruined by the excesses of the feast—or so it may look to the quick glance. More likely they bring their needs with them. If you need to be prevented from working, the thousand temptations are here, but I never believe that the city is responsible. Rather, if your need is to be hermetic while still suspended in the human current, a great city is where that cell is still possible. What it will cost in terms of a writer's own resources is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the same for writers as for anyone. Some live the jet life with gusto, affordable or not; others live more modestly than they could. One can get lost in a city also for lack of neighbors, but that happens in pastoral life as well, in its own dreadful mode.

The phenomenon of the young beginning artist has always been the same in any city. Wherever they learn to live on the cheap inevitably becomes fashionable—because the bohemian life can be a winning one, and the life that artists young or old make for themselves is often enviable for its panache—and for its verity. So the "Village" moves to SoHo, Tribeca, Weehawken, Hoboken, Brooklyn—and on. The question is how far out can artists go and still be in "the city."

But for cities that question is precisely the same. Modern communication is changing them. Inner cities die in part not because artists and others leave them, but because the bourses do. Then, sometimes, the artists, or even the suburbans, move back, and the cycle begins again, even if never quite the same. Nothing is—but it is naïve to blame the city, which in the main is an effect, not a cause. The poor are always on the move. Mecca has never been easy to conquer, nor the life of art either. Maybe this is part of why the two have long been taken to be synonymous.

But is New York more abrasive than most, more rapacious? Yes, insofar as it and we are Americans. Here "real estate" can operate almost without the brake of tradition, as it cannot in Paris or Rome. And an international center becomes at the mercy of international money. Of course this can mean that the work of young artists may be more widely bought, by corporate money. For writers that same story is not true.

But again, this has little to do with New York *per se* and much more with how a whole nation's writers bloom. Rising nations breed literature, as happened early on with us. Nations in stress breed it, as is happening on the South American continent. Or nations emerging from isolation, as during the last hundred years in Japan. Old nations with a long tradition persist in their own way, as in England and France, where the habit of words is bred in the bone. Despots breed poetry and the novel as answers, as with Russia since the nineteenth century, and in Central Europe now. A nation bedeviled by race bred our own Southern renaissance. Literature arises out of contrasts and stresses in both circumstance and idea. It can also arise, as in Victorian England, in a protracted era of peace. So do writers, either way.

The United States is not yet a suburban nation in toto, but at the moment is swamped in suburban values. The suburbs are not particularly good places to rear children whose values will expand. The village and the small town do better, including as they usually do all the hierarchies in the social scale. A suburb more often protects, along some preconceived median line having most to do with property, safety, and like standards of living. This can bring many tender experiences and linkages, perhaps. But the children of such suburbs, when sparked by college or ambition, tend to move out, and whether they're for the Harvard Business School or the arts they go where their ideal of *Kultur* and opportunity is. The richer American young now command the world in travel; they may go to India to find their philosophic stance, or to Los Angeles—or from the Wharton School of Finance to the cardsharp investment centers of Hong Kong. Those along the median line, all variations of them, still flock to New York, if they want more than the small cities or suburbs of their parents. And the poor? Thanks to the city colleges in which New York has educated its resident and immigrant youth since before the turn of the century, they flow into the city's art currents and scholarship opportunities as they can. Once it was the Jews and Italians who took most advantage of "free" education here; now it is probably the new Korean and Chinese émigrés, the blacks and the Puerto Ricans—but the push is the same.

In the arts, that ethnic flow is naturally most noticeable on the non-language side, first in music—the proportion of Orientals

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at Juilliard, we are told, is the highest ever—and in those accessory arts allied to the visual—stage and fashion design—where indeed "everybody" wants to be in New York, either in that lively performance theater whose death is always being reported, or where facilities like the remarkable Fashion Institute of Technology do indeed exist. And if the visual arts these days are spreading from Manhattan to "the boroughs" that may be because so many students come from there—or manage so to live.

Painters of course have always come from anywhere, and have been known to stay there, a Graves in coastal Washington, the Albrights in Buffalo, Diebenkorn in California, where printmakers and Hollywood have had their influence as well. And Christo wraps the world. But the dealers are here, and the New York show is still the imprimatur because of the one prime reason—that a city has access to the art of all the world, not only in museums—where Washington, D.C., now rivals New York in its collections—but in that ever seminal excitement which a metropolis offers to all the regional sources which always feed it. That is to say, it offers the buzz and hum which occur when all the arts are present, honored, and in high gear—*together.*

Writers have always been able to wrap the world. We carry a light pack—and our pack can travel of itself. Also, the connection between education and the writer is a devious one. In the generation just behind us, college was not that important. Cheever did not go at all. Hemingway, Miller, and Stein went to Paris to be refined, rather in the way that young men of the *Belle Époque* were advised to seek older women for their first sexual experience. Faulkner, like some other Southerners, remained where he was. Eliot emigrated. Wallace Stevens went to the office and Dr. Williams attended to *Paterson.* A writer's attachment to milieu is often devious, highly individual, and yet susceptible to "outside" influence. By nature we are travellers in the psyche. Sometimes we externalize this, choosing another country as Bowles chose North Africa, or using such places as vantage points from which to view our own—as my own country has massively done. But though we have had our Thoreaus as opposed to our Dreisers and the Dos Passos of *Manhattan Transfer,* I do not believe that the metropolis versus the provinces is the most apposite way to judge writers, now or before. We come from whence we come and go where we wist. The airplane has now enlarged that for everyone, and in a sense the *Kultur* of the city—and of the provinces too, never forget that—is everywhere transportable. Even in the graduate writing-schools, that minor but pervasive phenomenon, whether you trust or deplore their power to make writers, they gather students from anywhere. Yet the workshop idea came out of Iowa and Stanford, ultimately to spread East.

This has always happened. Regional theater is "new" only if we forget that a century ago many a small city had its "opera house," where a hodgepodge of stage presentation, from Adelina Patti and Sarah Bernhardt to the latest Houdini, might occur. In those days the culture was brought—we were a young country. Now we are not, and we are experiencing that same interchange between a country's parts which older nations do. Troubadours, in their wanderings, come to Paris. The commedia dell'arte, flourishing in the hill town, ultimately feeds a Pirandello—and a Fellini. Our own New England heritage—Emerson, Hawthorne, Melville—managed quite well on a quasi-rural basis. Twain, out of Mississippi and of it, lectured himself out of debt as well, around the world. To stipulate any of this, then or now, as a city's rise or decline is not to see an eternal process.

Yet though a city is a focus, a caravan of caravans moving in from all the nation, it is therefore always a symptom of that nation, rising and falling with it, as any archeology will show. Often a city will develop a character of its own out of its very terrain and situation, like San Francisco, or from its religious significance, like Benares, or out of a confluence of all this and armies too, as with Rome. See how Alexandria, the Medi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

terranean trade center that was to drain Carthage in that respect, would rise to be the nexus of Jewish and Hellenistic culture—only to be annexed by that same Rome. Or regard the long rivalry between "coarse" Moscow, burned and rebuilt as some capitols indomitably are, and Peter the Great's elegantly architectured aristocrat, St. Petersburg—now become Leningrad, and hanging onto its political system like a decoratively bleeding heart.

Or New York, whose skyscrapers, a concept sown around the world like dragon's teeth, share its harbor with a spiky little statue, *torchère* of "freedom," now being repaired. New York's twin symbol is surely its architecture—commercial battle-flag or domestic habitat—and its harbor, traditionally so open-armed. That architecture, ever gorging on its own height and hubris, and that harbor, rotting gently in the green bilge of what was once an industrial philosophy, always raucous, never without violence and inequity, yet focused on people—now symbolize to me the decline of the ethical standards of a nation.

Waddya mean by that, Cassandra? Don't we still have our savannahs and alpine ranges, our oceans—two—and like the song says, our waving fields of grain? And even Greenland's icy mountains, if we feel the need to explore? As well as a lot of people who still don't live in upside-down catacombs? Compared to all that, isn't your New York merely like one of those two-foot, key-shaped souvenir barometers once sold by every Exposition, centennial or bicentennial? The Key to the City is not the key to an entire nation!

No, but it is a key. And a barometer. Of an ever more terrifying import? Signaling not merely the "environmental" decline of a country—water, trees, air, and "all that"—but the narrowing of our nation's psyche and the shrinkage of its principles into a vast mean-spiritedness as ready for the newest trendy "developer" as the harbor on which New York sits.

A questionnaire asks for quick answers from the culture of the respondent. So I give you the images I see these days when I look at my city, and through its ever-refracting angles, at my nation. Remember meanwhile that I was brought up to a childlike acceptance of towers, and cut my teeth on tales of a city's corruption. These, or a city's constant changes, don't scare me, or surprise. I mean something else, having to do with the old family bible of those days, full of Gustave Doré's steel-engravings—each of them with a moral stance, and still on my shelf. Just now, I looked at them. The ark, a great dory looming, in which one has to believe. (Not so that bland white dove which kind of falls from it.) Chariots of fire coming for Elijah. A Red Sea dividing. The sun standing still, at Joshua's command. Sanctuaries desecrated. And handwriting on the wall . . . No illustration of Babylon. But I was taught to appreciate its Hanging Gardens—and to know that these could fall.

"Nowadays I see New York as a steel engraving embodying the falling moral stance of a nation. Its skyscrapers crowd ever closer and higher, a naked temptation in this era of the bomb."

Nowadays I see New York as a steel engraving embodying the falling moral stance of a nation. Its skyscrapers crowd ever closer and higher, a naked temptation in this era of the bomb. At their windowed bottoms, which are crammed with every provender, the homeless lie, more blatantly than in the days when they were confined to the Bowery. And in increasing number. They're a different crowd from those seasoned alcoholics—young schizoid dreamers, middle-aged striders with tatterdemalion hair, yes mad, some of them, but more lately poppy-cheeked girls whose only abnormality is to be where they are, and middle-aged women, garbed in a parody of neatness, who in a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

calmer age might have been mother's poor cousin who suffered from the menopause. One fine-featured kid makes his home in front of the fence that hides the lot where an addition is to be built on Carnegie Hall. Such people ululate all along a street that also houses the pick of the world's non-museum art—and one may meet their like now in any city of the continent. In their coarse cries and sporadic singing—and silence—I seem to hear a whole nation wallowing in luxe, ceding its farms to the banks—and buying its government on the cheap.

Today two furred women are going into Bendel's, followed by a lithe mop-hair, a model maybe, crazily bare in boxer shorts. I am strolling toward a show of Anselm Kiefer, also to a mixed bag of wonders at Sidney Janis Gallery, and to some German Expressionists at the Galerie St. Etienne (this last organized with the help of Lufthansa). A biased afternoon, art-wise, but tomorrow I might be in Pop-town, gooning at that all-inclusive Laura Ashley of the chic art interpreters, Jennifer Bartlett—or at some aging incendiary who still paints erotica—on eggs. On the way home, I'll stop somewhere along my own barrio, Ninth Avenue, to cleanse my eye, steady my heart, and buy a vegetable.

For, in answer to your final questions—one can write anywhere. The provinces squeeze you in. The city strings you out. But no, New York has not lost its high-pop leadership. It's too great a show. Those towers—are they defying the heavens, or the terrorists, or merely inviting a good conservative baptism by war? These people, great and small, this pastureland of the intellect, with all the world streaming in, or some fiercely tented mind walking quietly—this is my culture. I fear for it, as in a tragedy one fears for the heroically flawed. May it recover. May it go on.

Chuck Close

Chuck Close was born in Monroe, Washington, in 1940. He was educated at the University of Washington, the Yale University School of Art, and the Akademie der Bildenden Künste, in Vienna. He has exhibited widely in the United States and around the world since the 1960s, and his painting was the subject of a major retrospective exhibition organized by the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis in 1980. He lives in New York.

The notion that there is a New York art world, that is, one composed of native New Yorkers—or even long-term residents—is fallacious. A glance at a catalogue from any large group exhibition reveals a tiny proportion of artists born, raised, or for that matter educated in New York. A recent study by the New York Foundation for the Arts (the artists' grant-giving organization which replaced Creative Artists Program Service as New York State's major funder of individual artists) shows that sixty-three percent of the grantees have lived in New York State less than twenty years and thirty-eight percent less than ten years. Only thirty-four of last year's two hundred and twenty-five grantees were born in New York City. An artist had a greater chance of getting a New York Foundation grant if born in Michigan rather than in the Bronx.

If New York doesn't depend solely on homegrown talent, then what it does is what it has done so well for such a long time—which is to function as a kind of cultural

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

magnet for talent from all over the world. New York has been, for generations, our national conduit of art and ideas to the outside world, and increasingly it is the preferred showcase for international talent as well. It is difficult to imagine a successful European artist's career without representation in New York City. Everything shown here soon begins to be seen as New York art, no matter where someone comes from or no matter where he or she might actually live. An Italian is as easily—some would say more easily—assimilated in New York as someone from Indianapolis. Once that assimilation process takes place the artist can never quite go home again, because the New York art world is a very provincial place (provincial defined as having no interest in what goes on outside of the province, New York City, combined with a narrowness of outlook and exclusive concern with local matters). There is a perception held by members of this closed society, and in many ways it is accurate, that this is the only place that matters.

Can New York City continue to be that magnet, drawing the best and brightest young artists, not interested in being regional figures, artists who are to be tested in what is generally accepted to be the major marketplace of ideas? New York devours art and artists. What is good for the New York art world, with its voracious need for successive crops of new talent as grist for the critical mills, is not necessarily good for individual artists. This is an especially difficult time, it seems to me, to be a young artist in New York.

Artists in this city make greater sacrifices today than at any time I can remember. Less than twenty years ago, when my generation of artists came to the city, it was possible to live on four or five thousand dollars a year. Rents for a twenty-five-hundred-square-foot loft ran from a hundred to a hundred and fifty dollars a month. Today the same spaces would rent for fifteen hundred dollars a month or more. Teaching jobs were relatively plentiful and it was possible to work two or three days a week and make art the rest of the time. Today's financial pressures have forced artists to live in what other generations would have considered unacceptable neighborhoods or out of the city altogether; to postpone having families; to share small, unsuitable spaces, often with one person working days and another using the same space to work in at nights; and to work long hours at a full-time job just to support their "profession." Other generations of artists have traditionally needed to work only part time, often in some arts-related position, but now artists regularly work forty or more hours a week at jobs like carpentry and bartending.

Coupled with this greater need for sacrifice is a newfound sense of enormously exaggerated expectations of what an art career should be. Often young artists seem to view this time of sacrifice and compromise as a necessary "investment" in their careers. Some feel that they can only afford to invest five or six years (with all they have to forgo) to see if their career will fall into place. If they are not successful at the end of this short period, they will have to reassess their options. There is something about this attitude which approaches a kind of art-world lottery. The need to "make it" in such a short period of time has fostered a new and rather frantic careerism. That thinking, no matter how understandable given today's climate, doesn't allow much time for the development of a personal vision. Perhaps this explains the appeal of "appropriation" as today's preferred method of arriving at imagery or a stylistic point of view. Also, there is little time for trial and error or for the taking of a tangent. We run the risk, at a time when the New York art world ingests so much new work so quickly, of not allowing for the logical evolution of an artist's work to progress at its own pace. An artist must make it all happen quickly and sometimes there is a forced and unnatural quality to that hothouse production.

An unfortunate by-product of this careerism is an increased sense of competition, a belief that if an artist doesn't make it happen—and soon—another artist will. For many the art world is not seen as a com-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

munity of artists lending each other support so much as a group of competitors trying to outscheme each other. The idealism of other times seems quite often to have been replaced by the necessity for a strategy. Not only is there an effort to figure out what strategy will produce the kind of art that will fill the art world's needs for that particular moment, but also there are social strategies, such as trying to meet people who can be helpful in one's career. This can take a lot of time away from the studio. The perceived need to figure out what the art world wants suggests that the importance of having a good eye or a good hand has been replaced by the importance of having a good nose.

"It is hard to make good art . . . in a condition of bitterness."

For my generation of artists, most of whom never expected to have any financial success, it was possible to have a part-time job, exhibit occasionally, receive the respect and admiration of a handful of peers (and perhaps a collector or two), and feel like a success. Many of these artists, who have spent twenty or twenty-five years or more working in New York with little or no critical attention and virtually no financial success, do not evidence the same edge of desperation. They cling to another set of expectations and values and find sustenance in their relationships to their old art-world community. Unfortunately, for many young artists today with a glamorized view of artists' lives (spectacular lofts in *Architectural Digest* and dinner parties duly recorded in *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*), the heavy burden of unrealistic expectations for all but a handful of artists has doomed the rest to inevitable self-perceived failure at a very early stage in their careers. It is hard to make good art or sound career decisions in a condition of bitterness. I don't worry about the successful artist being corrupted by having too much too soon. There are plenty of examples of artists of other generations receiving a great deal of attention early in their careers. Obviously success is to be reckoned with, as is failure, and I see no reason to assume that today's superstars will have any greater difficulty than earlier ones did in coping with success. But I do worry about a generation of artists who feel washed up by the age of thirty or thirty-five if something miraculous (and spectacularly remunerative) hasn't happened to them.

For many the alternative of pursuing a career in a regional situation may look more and more attractive. It is certainly possible to have a substantial regional career and perhaps a far more rewarding one—in terms of both ego gratification and money—considering the recent activities of regional arts councils, state arts organizations, increased corporate support, and "percent for art" programs associated with public and private building around the country. Obviously the competition for this attention and these dollars is far less intense elsewhere than it is in New York City with its tens of thousands of artists. But artists probably don't become artists because they are practical people. And most importantly, the New York art world remains, and undoubtedly will remain for the foreseeable future, the yardstick against which everything else is to be measured.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Arlene Croce

Arlene Croce was born in Providence, Rhode Island. She was the founding editor of Ballet Review *and has been the dance critic of* The New Yorker *since 1973. She has published* The Fred Astaire & Ginger Rogers Book, *and two volumes of dance criticism*—Afterimages, *and* Going to the Dance—*and is currently at work on a book on Balanchine's ballets. She lives in Brooklyn.*

---

1. New York leads the world in dance, and not only in the modern dance, where the strength of a native tradition has been unquestioned for forty years; we also have the best ballet—the soundest in schooling, the most artistically distinguished—of any that currently exist. True, the creativity that produced this supremacy is past or passing. But so is the struggle for recognition which marked the careers of the older generation of American dancers. On the gifts of this generation American dance rose from penury and insignificance to the pre-eminence it now enjoys. It also possesses a measure of public support and, in ballet at least, an institutional status recognized the (Western) world over. This is all new power, and in the dimming lustre of the Golden Age the future looks bright enough. At any rate, no other world capital has what New York has in dance, or the potential to acquire it.

2. Genuine leaders are rare in dance. Two of the most promising are Mark Morris and Garth Fagan, and neither, as it happens, works in New York. The question is whether this marks the beginning of New York's decline as dance capital or only the start of a new decentralized phase in American dance. Morris and Fagan, who are based in Seattle and Rochester respectively, could not have made their reputations without the acclaim of New York, and they maintain high visibility here. Not only that: they are products of New York dance culture. But the spread of this culture—as opposed to locally cultivated attitudes ("*we* like story ballets")—is an inevitable development, critical to the growth of the art in America. Dance is, after all, something you have to see live—it doesn't exist in any other form. This may explain the lag in dance sophistication relative to the other arts. A locally based dance company with a brilliant national reputation is something every American city of size is now saying it would like to get its hands on. Let's hope they mean it. Just now too many localities have opera companies that do *The Rake's Progress* while the ballet companies dance *Les Sylphides.*

3. One is interested in developments in Seattle or Rochester or wherever without wanting to live there. An aspect of decentralization I'm curious about is the extent to which new dance work made "out there" will take shape from its environs. Is there in our era of cultural homogenization such a thing as a regional dance accent?

4. New York pushes you like no other place; here you live inside your work. Speaking as a writer, I find the whole fantasy of writing more intensely real in New York—easier to connect to other aspects of life.

Then there are the wonderful libraries and museums, the book and record stores, and—not least—the movies. When I was growing up in Providence, I wanted to be a New Yorker because New York was the first to get the new movies. Now the big attraction is the *old* movies—the revival houses that show their permanent collections of re-seeables with occasional rarities thrown in, or the MOMA series like the one last fall devoted to the films of Mikio Naruse (1905-1969), which are whole new contributions to the repertory of classics.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But New York is tough on people without money—it was in the Fifties when I came here as a student, and it is infinitely worse now. To live in New York is to take a vow of voluntary poverty. Artists, especially young artists, are readier than most people to deal with the indecently low standard of living New York imposes, but it didn't use to cost so much. In the Fifties, it was still possible to get a cheap apartment, and after paying the rent you still had enough left over for theater, concert, and ballet tickets every night. I can't imagine how young people do it now.

And young people with special needs—where do they go? Dancers were among the first to discover loft living, but gentrification is doing them out of their lofts, and real-estate sharks are snatching up comparable work spaces all over Manhattan. This is the kind of shortage that intimately affects an art form. If it keeps up, it is going to accelerate decentralization to a perhaps detrimental degree.

5. Writing about dance keeps me in New York, and the amount of activity and the quality of performance keep me reasonably happy. But working and living are two different things. I couldn't work as well in any other city, but I could certainly live better than I do in New York—who couldn't?

6. ——

7. New York does possess the best in dance; it is also hospitable to the worst in dance. I cite as an example the parade of mediocrities from abroad sponsored in recent seasons by the Brooklyn Academy of Music. From the respectful reception these companies got you'd think New York was just another parched provincial town. New York taste is strangely sentimental; it likes to give little guys a hand up—real talent makes it nervous. New Yorkers are as susceptible as anybody to advance hype and manipulation, yet we think of ourselves as tastemakers to the world. Actually, the mythical New York ("If you can make it there, you'll make it anywhere") does come through once in a while, as when it rushed to the City Center and welcomed *Tango Argentino,* a show that opened with no fanfare and no critical reputation whatsoever, and went on to run five months on Broadway.

8. Well, Broadway musicals are much easier to get into, but then there are so few of them that one wants to get into. I'm not being flippant; I think the decline of popular music, which affects the musical, which affects Broadway, which affects the quality of New York night life in general, is a cultural tragedy which has taken place in the last twenty years. It occurred at about the same time they razed the old Met and invented Lincoln Center. New York's night life was traditionally centered on live music in one form or another. With the drying up of the musicals and the thinning of the crowds that swarmed around the old opera house and the commercial theaters to its north, there was nothing to keep the Times Square district from turning into Pornville. There have been some side benefits; I think that, initially at least, the scarcity of musicals brought a new audience to the ballet. But I continue to wonder about the audience for what Broadway used to produce—an audience that isn't satisfied by rock concerts *or* the ballet and isn't about to stay home every night with its VCR's. These are the people who vanished into the suburbs with the destruction of middle-class New York. Their values, so damagingly underrated and undermined in the convulsions of the Sixties and the Seventies, were rooted in middle-class aspiration, a hankering for the finer things. Right now we see a vacuum in the way American middle-class culture is designed—it's a culture of infantilization, one which no longer represents what people want for their children but what children want for themselves. It strikes with bitter force at New York, because New York was where, symbolically at least, the old dreams came true. New York was the City of Aspiration. If it is to become that again, it will have to provide something to take the place of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

middlebrow art forms that people used to grow up on.

9. Changes that are the result of social and economic conditions are easy to see in the New York cultural scene, and they're easier to confront than changes that have come about as a result of the devitalization of an art form. The Broadway musical died not only because it got too expensive to produce or because its audience had moved to the suburbs—it died because the connection between it and popular music was broken by the advent of rock. And if dancers now see fit to leave New York, it won't be just because of the high rents; it would also be because not much is going on compared to a decade ago—not much that's compellingly

"Insofar as New York symbolized the dream of middle-class affluence and the refinement of taste, its decline is a national catastrophe."

new and different. It takes more than a socio-economic crisis—which we are undoubtedly witnessing—to drive the arts out of New York or to diminish them. The worst blow suffered by American dance was the death of Balanchine; this one event reduced the cultural vitality of New York by half. In the face of this loss, and in the face of such spiritual losses as those inflicted on the middle class by the youth culture, the problems that stem from social and economic conditions seem eminently solvable.

10. Insofar as New York symbolized the dream of middle-class affluence and the refinement of taste, its decline is a national catastrophe. Just as New York has become the city of the rich and the poor, so it rules a polarized musical-theatrical culture in which the high arts frown down on a mass of Kidcult, while a jumble of retro diversions—the past repackaged—leaps about in between. (Here's where my old movies come in. For years, the Hollywood staples were just there to be enjoyed; now we form theories about them.)

11. Regional dance culture is still in the making, and much of it is consciously being modeled on what New York does better. No regional ballet company, no matter how richly endowed or thoughtfully directed, can hope to dance Balanchine's ballets better than New York City Ballet; but the nationwide dispersal of the Balanchine repertory and of former Balanchine dancers to positions of authority is the best hope we have of raising standards in classical dance to a fit level of comparison. In fact, if ballet is to become a national art form, New York City Ballet and the School of American Ballet *must* inspire smaller-scale replicas across the land. Balanchine imitated and adapted Petipa, and he must be imitated and adapted in turn. There's just no other way to do it.

12. You mean, what if some dazzling young company arose somewhere out West with its own style, school, repertory, and audience? To paraphrase a poem Kenneth Koch once wrote, "I'd pack my bags and follow. You can have New York, New York, I'll take 'Son of Apollo.'"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Clement Greenberg

Clement Greenberg was born in New York in 1909 and graduated from Syracuse University in 1930. He has been an editor of both Partisan Review *and* Commentary, *and was for some years the art critic for* The Nation. *The collection of his art criticism called* Art & Culture, *published in 1961, is generally regarded as a classic in its field. Two volumes of his writings on art,* Perceptions and Judgments, 1939-1944 *and* Arrogant Purpose, 1945-1949, *edited by John O'Brian, will be published by the University of Chicago Press in the fall of 1986. Mr. Greenberg divides his time between New York City and a house in upstate New York.*

The more I pondered these questions about New York the less I felt able to answer them usefully. Where I can offer something to the point—i.e., that the best painting and sculpture over here now seem to be being produced in the hinterland—I would have to qualify at length, and I simply don't want to. So I'd say that *much* of the best art, not *all* of it, is being made outside New York, and then I'd name names and places. Again, I don't want to. I just want to state what I think is a large fact and leave the details for some other occasion.

Yes, there are now important centers of artistic production away from New York—not large but important. This is as new for us as it would be for the French with respect to Paris and the British with respect to London. It could be the most innovative cultural phenomenon of the time.

These new centers of production may be provincial in location, but the art produced is not at all provincial. And it certainly isn't "regional." (And anyhow, how can regional art or culture come to much under advanced industrialism?) The art produced is not provincial because it gets its sustenance from New York. The artists involved would be the last to deny that. New York is where more of recent art can be seen than anywhere else. This matters very much to the seriously ambitious painter or sculptor.

New York remains the center also because it remains the center of attention and of attention-giving. It's where new art gets validated, for better or worse—and more importantly, in terms of attention rather than in those of money. (I don't mean "media" attention.) That's why your "heralded new talents" from abroad flock to New York; they can make just as much money staying home.

So New York remains the effective center, retains its dominance, despite its losses as a center of production. (I'm still confining myself to visual art.) Do I like this? No. Visual art began to be centralized in the West in the fifteenth century, and its centers became fewer and fewer, till in the nineteenth century there was only Paris (don't tell me about Munich and Düsseldorf), and now there's only New York. And now New York spreads bad taste, incubates it. (Those outlying centers of artistic production talk about profit by their distance from New York.) Trends may not be born in New York—trends, fashions—but New York is where they get certified for the time being, and whence they spread. I would welcome New York's displacement, and not for this reason alone. I would welcome a decentralization of visual art in general. But I can't imagine how it might come about, despite what I've said above about the centers of superior production away from New York. I don't see decentralization coming nearer over here than in France or Britain. In the visual arts one seemingly petty reason explains why: the fact that reproductions don't suffice, as they do in literature, and possibly in music. Malraux's "museum without walls" was an imposture.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

camillos
KOUROS

EXHIBITIONS—1986-1987 SEASON

GIACOMO BALLA
BILL BARRETT
CARLO CARRA
GIORGIO DE CHIRICO
MICHAEL LEKAKIS
ANDRE MASSON
BRUNO ROMEDA
THEODOROS STAMOS
ANATOLY ZVEREV
RUSSIAN AND ITALIAN FUTURISTS
"I KNOW WHAT I LIKE" by John Bernard Myers

23 East 73rd Street
New York, NY 10021
TEL 212-288-5888

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mark Helprin

Mark Helprin was born in New York City in 1947. He was educated at Harvard University and Magdalen College, Oxford. His books include A Dove of the East and Other Stories, Ellis Island and Other Stories, *and two novels,* Refiner's Fire *and* Winter's Tale. *He lives in New York.*

If New York no longer suffers the "lead" in the fine arts and in literature, this may be partly because of the sensibility that would perceive leads and lags in these things, measuring their rise and fall by the quantitative data pertinent to cultural institutions, and by the lazy, dull, and common wisdom that makes for reputation.

What you are talking about, really, are numbers and fleeting opinions—how many artists, books, shows, tickets, and museum days, and how much self-congratulation? What do the cliques say? Who is currently safe to admire? What is the number of awards per capita? How do the Europeans assess our reputation? How many Yaddos lie within two hundred and twenty-five miles of Times Square?

I am often pierced as if by the arrows of pygmies when my relatives from the sun belt come to New York and tell me how much culture they have in Dallas or Los Angeles. Though our culture is very big, their culture is getting bigger, and you never know: one day, their culture may be bigger than our culture, and everyone from all around will point and say, "Look! They have the biggest culture!" Now, if you want a big culture, you have to deal wholesale with numbers and opinions, so they always enumerate, and they never fail to cite safe reputations—two ballet companies, an opera company of excellent international repute, three well-known museums, entire streets and districts devoted to the arts. When I tell them that I don't think all this has anything whatsoever to do with culture, they look at me as if I were a raccoon. That doesn't deter me. Let them think that I am a raccoon.

I tell them that culture has little to do with cultural institutions, which usually come after the fact, like the dry wood that follows the living tissue in a tree. Culture is to art what movement is to sport: you can't buy it, sell it, or support it. And you cannot design culture, encourage it, or control it—except perhaps negatively. What patrons, critics, administrators, and spectators rarely understand is that their participation is not central to art, and, indeed, their influence is more often than not wonderfully ruinous. Contrary to several thousand years of extorted odes, requiems, and statuary, the history of art should probably read, "*Despite* the Medici . . . . *Despite* the Earl of Southampton . . . . *Despite* Otto Kahn . . . . *Despite* Jack Lang . . ." etc.

How then does one account for statistically unexpected concentrations, whether by period or place (or both), of art and literature, if not by the activities of supportive institutions? How, specifically, in New York? My answer is that New York has come to possess its magic because of its topography, its climate, the light, the water surrounding it, the energy of its commerce, the compounding of twenty nationalities in a hundred mixed neighborhoods, its vast range of sensual juxtapositions, and because it is at once a haven, a prison, a beacon, a gateway, a heaven, and a hell. There are four wonderfully distinct seasons here, and many conditions of light. The history of this city is far more than the story of three hundred and fifty years in one place, since practically everyone either comes from somewhere else or is immediately descended from those who do, and this ethnic rope-making alone is more an engine of culture than would be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

three dozen Lincoln Centers. New York is the site of extremes; in numbers, in size, in engineering, in architecture, in ambition, in exaggeration, in anarchy. It is no accident that the poetry of Walt Whitman and of Hart Crane is the poetry of fever, delusion, and wonder, for such things are the life-blood of the city. And, yet, whenever politicians talk about "the arts" they almost inevitably mean entities that employ ticket-takers.

But you cannot buy a ticket to civilization, and policies that make the city into a kind of fish farm for the breeding and keeping of artists (articulture) guarantee nothing but, again, numbers, with no assurance of "more" culture. This is because culture is not produced by artists, artists are produced by culture. Lest you think that I have been overcome by the delirium of which I speak, consider that the word culture comes from the Latin for worship, and that the O.E.D. defines it as "improvement by training; intellectual development." These are active states, and they do not suggest watching other people do things, or viewing someone else's work, any more than the word "sport" suggests watching baseball on television. No one can successfully deny that the provision of a marketplace will give rise to opportunity. But the goods in a marketplace have little relation to its structure, just as an artificial reef can attract massive and beautiful fish, or it can attract complacent barnacles and slimy snails.

Of what do you think when you think of Winslow Homer? The exhibition at the Whitney, sponsored jointly by Champion Paper and the National Endowment for the Arts? Harry Abrams, or Hacker Art Books? The critical studies by James Thomas Flexner or Lloyd Goodrich? Sotheby's? The ten Homers in the incredibly valuable collection of Mrs. Arvin L. Plutosis? The Metropolitan Museum? Or do you think of a beach, and blue sky, and wind off the ocean playing havoc with a woman's hair?

The first things in the previous paragraph came last, and the last things came first. Though pointy-headed arts bureaucrats may think that culture comprises museums, foundations, collectors, critics, and juries, they're wrong. Culture is the gleam of the sea in Winslow Homer's eye. Though they can measure and chart the vitality and numbers of critics, museums, foundations, etc., and they can assess the opinions of groups of people here and there, and they can listen to conversation at openings and arts benefits, they cannot measure the light darting off the waves at Long Branch.

I suggest that those who are concerned that "New York's status as a cultural capital may actually be undergoing a significant shift" take a walk from Mount St. Vincent to Brighton Beach. Along the way, they will see things that would give Mrs. Arvin L. Plutosis hives. They will hear a hundred types of thunder and see half a billion sights; they will pass people upon whose faces they may read every emotional and spiritual state known to man; they will burrow through the greatest commerce the world has ever known; and they will walk in the shadow of structures ambitious enough to dam the clouds.

That is culture. It is there, fully accessible, as always, and it hasn't changed a smidgen. Nothing can be done to turn it back when it surges forward, and nothing can be done to push it forward when it turns back. The conditions and forces which have distinguished New York in the past are present and fully operational. Despite gossip at dinner parties and tittle in the salons, the culture of New York remains independent, immeasurable, and unmanageable. In the face of this great and marvelous gift, there is no need to worry about rank.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ada Louise Huxtable

Ada Louise Huxtable was born in New York City and studied at Hunter College and the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University. She was for many years the architectural critic for The New York Times, *and was the first writer to receive a Pulitzer Prize for criticism. Among her books are* Classic New York, Will They Ever Finish Bruckner Boulevard?, *and* The Tall Building Artistically Reconsidered. *Her new book,* Architecture Anyone?, *will be published by Random House in 1986. In 1981, she was named a MacArthur Prize Fellow. She now divides her time between New York and a home in Massachusetts.*

Unlike the visual or performing arts in New York, architecture is not nurtured in the city's studios or ad hoc spaces; its location is the city's streets. There is no way to discover or develop talent in the sense that New York has generated new ideas and radical departures in those increasingly rare alternative accommodations that have been the city's traditional aesthetic incubators. It is virtually impossible for the young architect to design or build here, except for what might be called the incubator loft or apartment, and certainly not on the city's Brobdingnagian scale. Architecture in New York is a big-name, big-money, big-deal phenomenon tied inexorably to the leverage calculations of builders, the manipulative skills of lawyers, the gambling instincts of bankers, the accommodating principles of elected politicians, and the boom-and-bust cycles of real estate. Above all, it is big business—bigger than ever. In the 1980s, it has become a stupendous game played for the highest stakes and the largest buildings in the city's history. At the same time, there is enough earnest talk about "the art of architecture" in redundant lectures and symposia attended by resident and visiting architects and intellectuals debating the virtues of modernism versus postmodernism to drown out the noise of construction. There is more concern with style than on Seventh, Madison, and Columbus avenues combined, or even in SoHo and the East Village, where the semiotics of chic can be a desperately important matter. The fact is, however, that architecture in New York in the Eighties is the consummate combination of power, politics, and profit that is the city's greatest art form.

It might logically be deduced from this that those concerned with architecture as a form of art rather than as a form of money have been forced, willy-nilly, into academic or aesthetic retreat. But that would be an unrealistic oversimplification of a remarkably incestuous and somewhat perverse relationship between the two. The new generation of young, well-educated property developers deals in a more complex bottom line than its self-made and more single-minded elders. The art of architecture, so very recently defined by the minimal, anonymous, and understated tenets of modernism and now sporting fancy postmodernist dress and waving flags of historical recall, has become a commodity that can be exploited profitably for its novelty and recognition value. Building skins are practically run up and down with zippers to suggest the "image" the developer wants to project. Architecture's star performers (not only at the drawing board but on the talk and party circuits) provide the status designer labels that sell so well. Nobody seems to mind a few knockoffs; cities here and abroad have their Philip Johnson and Helmut Jahn originals or reruns. A New York developer has even ordered a special building top from the firm of Arquitectonica, correctly perceiving that this colorful, almost cartoon-book style can be attached to a standard speculator bot-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tom as a marketable item. It doesn't really matter that Arquitectonica works out of Miami, or that Johnson, and his associate, John Burgee, are headquartered in New York—currently relocating from the Seagram Building to their tricky new "lipstick" building just south of Citicorp on Third Avenue but still with resident rights in the Seagram Building's Four Seasons restaurant, where the power games are played. Or that Jahn operates out of a gilded and marbled Art Deco building on Chicago's East Wacker Drive. Or that the deals are made in New York. The buildings can be anywhere. And no matter how much attention is paid to the abstract or theoretical designs that are supposed to be on architecture's leading edge, these are the conspicuous structures that make certain news and uncertain art. It is the extraordinary explosion of the skyscraper in the Eighties that fascinates laymen and professionals alike. But if the tall building has come, more than ever, to symbolize the architecture of the twentieth century, it is far from a distinctly New York product.

New York still has pride of place (if I may be forgiven for a phrase that is being trashed and trivialized by breezy popularization in assorted media). This is only true, however, because of the unique dramatic mass that has long been the base of its claim to architectural fame, and the city continues to have the unparalleled energy, scale, and impact of the activities that go with it. But as the new blockbusters edge out the smaller, older buildings in the relentless march of Manhattan's economic destiny, the traditional generators for art and industry are also being phased out. Recent testimony in the Albany state legislature pictured the arts as imperiled by the real-estate boom; the exodus, some speakers claimed, has already begun. What a curious role for the art of building to play!

As for the skyscraper itself, however, New York can claim only indirect participation in its creative advance. The most watched (and the most expensive) skyscraper in the world today is in Hong Kong—Norman Foster Associates' Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. An emphatically high-tech work of art, this structure has the anachronistic distinction of offering some of the most impressive and highly visible tall-building technology ever to be erected on foundations hand-prepared by skilled coolie labor. This extraordinary building, just barely completed, has already had issues of two international architectural journals devoted to it—the British *Architectural Review* and the American *Progressive Architecture*. And although the office that probably has more skyscrapers on its boards than any other, Kohn Pederson Fox, has its home base in New York, its products are appearing most conspicuously in other cities and only belatedly here. William Pederson's 333 Wacker Drive in Chicago is a benchmark building: a sleek demonstration of how the persistently problematic commercial tower can be resolved through the rational and imaginative interpretation of the design possibilities of site and shape and the sophisticated handling of material. Clearly and cleanly conceived and aesthetically convincing, it makes the pick-a-theme fruit-it-up approach of kitsch-history look like junk architecture. The firm's more frankly elaborate solution of the Procter & Gamble headquarters uses decorative forms with a freshness and expertise that contribute richly to an evolving skyscraper style. The building is in Cincinnati. Even the highly publicized Humana tower by Michael Graves, the recently completed competition-winning skyscraper that is looked on as the revolutionary realization of a reborn classicism or a pallid Thirties retread, is in Louisville, Kentucky. So much for pride of place.

New York's "famous first," Johnson and Burgee's split-pedimented AT&T Building that was heralded as the big starting gun of postmodernism at the time of its design in the 1970s, has pooped out in the 1980s as a daringly innovative departure. Its lifeless pomposities seem dull and simplistic today; there is no blander stretch-façade, now that the idea of moldings has lost all shock value, and the gloomy public space with its potted trees in enormous sepulchral containers like

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Etruscan tombs flanked by cute antebellum chairs does not grow in credibility or charm. One cannot escape a small nagging feeling of someone's having been had. Even Helmut Jahn's most overt wallboard-and-plastic borderline vulgarities, about to burst on New York after half a dozen of his spectaculars have already gussied up Chicago, have a supercharged energy that is part of an architectural vision based on a thoroughly professional concern with structure and space. This is bold, brash work, although God is obviously not in the details.

But perhaps the AT&T Building is more symbolic than is immediately evident, in a way that is not quite what was expected. Taken even at its own or its champions' value, it makes New York's current position as a kind of avant-garde backwater clear. It is interesting to note, in addition, that the city's established developers did not become megabuilding, megabuck operators until relatively recently. Only when the New York State Urban Development Corporation, working with the city, called for proposals for the Battery Park City Commercial Center in 1979, based on a carefully prepared master plan and design guidelines, was New York's customary one-building-at-a-time development procedure significantly breached. While the New York method wasn't exactly a penny-ante operation, it was small potatoes compared to the scale, and the figures, today. And it was not a New York but a Canadian development firm, Olympia & York, that surprised the locals by offering to build the entire Battery Park City complex with its public spaces virtually all at once. This ushered in the real big time. In the Eighties, Donald Trump, the native New Yorker who brought true glitz to Fifth Avenue in Trump Tower, has proposed a congeries of skyscrapers to be built on the West Side Penn Central tracks as a "television city" meant to lure NBC when its Rockefeller Center lease is up, not to mention all those upwardly mobile New Yorkers who lust for the view from the top. The architect of this drop-dead dream-city is the Chicagoan, Helmut Jahn.

There is, however, one unique architectural and urbanistic development that characterizes New York in the Eighties. It is a practice initiated by the city's ever-upbeat Mayor, Ed Koch, who sees it as the ticket to the city's future solvency and grandeur. This is the stratagem of selling the city, or parts of it, to the highest, or in one instance the second-highest, bidder. There are, of course, a number of conditions attached, but that is essentially it. This blatant end run around responsible planning has its apologists, including the city's planners, who have not exhibited any noticeable discomfort in the face of a truly outrageous default in the orderly professional pursuit of appropriate, desirable, and coordinated public goals. The strategy is simplicity itself. The city offers a piece of land—a prime site on Columbus Circle was one, a fine waterfront location on the Battery is another—to the developer who will pay the most and promise the best. The best obviously has to be the biggest—since the point of an auction is to sell to the highest bidder—in order to carry the escalated price of the land and make the project profitable. The biggest is clearly more than the city's regulations will permit, with good reason, so that special permits or variances will automatically be needed to make the winning violations official.

"But perhaps the AT&T building is more symbolic than is immediately evident, in a way that is not quite what was expected. Taken even at its own or its champions' value, it makes New York's current position as a kind of avant-garde backwater clear."

This media-sensitive process, not surprisingly, reinforces the need for "star" names. The celebrity recognition factor is not only a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

high architectural (read: marketing) priority in New York, it is also redundant and self-fulfilling, as I learned early on as a journalist. With all that is riding on these enormous investments, no inexperienced architect is going to feel the tap of the wand. Without accredited celebrity status, Michelangelo would not have gotten the job: Arnolfo di Cambio would never have made it. At least not unless he had been in the public eye long enough to be thoroughly identified by the news weeklies as the hottest architect around, and then he would be well-advised to have a gimmick to guarantee skyline visibility. Only at that point would the equation of risk and salability be perceived as being in acceptable balance.

There is much happy hollering about huge benefits to the city's tax base and the jobs and investment dollars to be gained by this procedure, as well as smoke screens of ambitious architectural designs from the competing developers (although the Mayor, in his usual open fashion, has declared that the money comes first), and advisory groups set up to insure—what? that these monsters are in good taste? Protests about the lack of related planning or calculations of impact, desirable or viable density, shadows on streets and parks, and sheer overbearing hubris (Greek for chutzpah) are less clearly heard. Certainly the protests were little heard and even less heeded for another New York blockbuster development to be perpetrated in the Eighties—the Times Square redevelopment plan, a wrongheaded approach for which the courts are clearing the way. This scheme is a throwback in every sense of the word. It is a replay of subsidized Sixties bulldozer renewal, when subsidy is no longer necessary and the bulldozer has been discredited. Its chief ornaments will be four oppressively large, vaguely turn-of-the-century mansarded towers from Johnson and Burgee's central casting.

But if architecture and the media are increasingly indistinguishable, so are architecture and zoning. The relationship, however, is almost refreshingly direct: the former, if one still wishes to call it that, is created by the latter. The scale, bulk, and height of the construction that is a 1980s New York phenomenon and a clear harbinger of the 1990s unless someone gets busy with radical zoning reform—a hard thing to do in a city where developers contribute so handsomely to elected officials' over-the-table campaign funds—makes chatter about style and contextualism ludicrous. The real issue is not design, but downzoning. One need only look at Madison Avenue in the upper 50s and West Fifty-second Street from Fifth to Seventh avenues to see what one of the more recent zoning shell games has produced by pushing densities around: here is the enormity (right word) of what New York permits and encourages in its scandalous perversion of the idea of controls, demonstrated in full, horrifying three dimensions. Anyone here remember what zoning is all about? Little things like regulating size, height, density, light, and air? Making things smaller, not bigger; better, not worse? Hard-won legal inconsequentials like the exercise of the police power for the general public good and the protection and advancement of the amenity and workability of the city?

But to get back to art, in some sense of the word. What better place to look than at the city's museums? Is that not the meeting point for art and architecture, where an efflorescence of creativity should reach some kind of synergistic fever heat? Heat there is, as the art and architectural communities turn out to debate an Eighties' explosion of museum building plans: proposed additions to the Whitney and the Guggenheim have been so controversial that the announcement of a competition to enlarge the Brooklyn Museum has gone virtually unremarked. All this follows hard on the apparently endless new wings opening with redundant regularity at the Metropolitan and the expansion of the Museum of Modern Art made possible by the construction of its trend-setting and revenue-producing condominium tower. Not only were the museum, the street, and the neighborhood transformed by the Modern's real-estate venture,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but so, also and alas, was the Modern itself, far beyond its increased size; its relationship to its public, once so personal and idiosyncratic, is now coolly institutional, with all the loss of spirit and style that brings.

For the Whitney addition, a scheme that stuns with its overblown scale and aims, the trustees chose a Princeton, N.J., leader of the latest in postmodern classicism, Michael Graves. The Guggenheim selected the New York architectural firm of Gwathmey Siegel, leading practitioners of a postmodern modernism; the design has resisted the architects' most resourceful and conscientious efforts at compatibility to obtain an instant and widespread notoriety for its astonishing resemblance to a sanitary facility. Both succeed in sabotaging the buildings they purport to respect—Marcel Breuer's bumptious High Modern at the Whitney, Frank Lloyd Wright's acknowledged masterwork at the Guggenheim; by what varying degrees of dishonor or insensitivity or even mendacity this result is achieved is beside the point. One does not doubt that there are legitimate needs; one is simply appalled by the solutions. But this is a city where the modest or the sensible or the possible are unthinkable and excess is always predictably wretched. To see grown architects arguing the merits of these dubious achievements could make one cry. The merits and demerits of the national museum explosion is another subject, of course, and New York has an undeniable edge; it comes from overwhelming riches, however, not from the advanced creative nature of its architectural or other programs.

It was an unusual event this year, in fact, when both the Metropolitan and the Modern had simultaneous architecture shows; they are usually few and far between. Both dealt with dead architects, but no matter; the Modern honored the centennial of the birth of Mies van der Rohe and the Met displayed drawings and photographs (almost all marked "demolished") of the work of this country's first Beaux Arts-trained practitioner, Richard Morris Hunt, whose Fifth Avenue mansions and Newport villas attest to an early expertise in architectural power politics. Farther downtown, where things tend to be livelier, Cooper Union presented a clutch of mesmerizing drawings by the Italian Futurist, Antonio Sant'Elia, that quietly revised at least one chapter of modern architectural history. Uptown, the Cooper Hewitt Museum, which often goes where the others fear to tread, mounted a jolly little show of the avant-garde furniture, interiors, and life-styles devised by the architects of the Memphis group in Milan, including some quite wonderfully cheerful drawings—not exactly a revolutionary opening shot, since this fashionable skyrocket has already trajectoried to the High Point furniture market for the usual copies and parodies. But perhaps the best indication of where the architectural avant-garde stands in New York is that one of the city's bumper crop of luxury condo apartment buildings is being marketed trendily as the Memphis, with point-of-sale displays in Bloomingdale's furniture department. All roads lead to Bloomie's.

"But perhaps the best indication of where the architectural avant-garde stands in New York is that one of the city's bumper crop of luxury condo apartment buildings is being marketed trendily as the Memphis, with point-of-sale displays in Bloomingdale's furniture department. All roads lead to Bloomie's."

Well, if it isn't Bloomingdale's, then where is the aesthetic leadership coming from? Where is the real architectural action? For all the posturing here, the lead players are scattered all over. As at any time in creative history there are a few chief actors and a lot of flashy bit parts. There are never more than

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a handful of structures that can change the way we see the relationships between life and art, or enlarge our vision of the built world. How often does a building have the power to move, surprise, or delight us? And how often does that power reverberate through the professional consciousness and reach a public that may receive or resist it with predictable misunderstanding? These are always controversial buildings: James Stirling's museums in England, Germany, and the United States, ranging from major to minuscule; Norman Foster's structural aesthetic stretched to its expressive limits at the Sainsbury Center in East Anglia and the Hong Kong bank. In Japan, Arata Isozaki takes history apart and puts it together again with an intricate and ironic twentieth-century sensibility for an architecture impossible at any other time and place; Fumihiko Maki quietly pursues a stringent aesthetic spiked with the unexpected. In Italy, the out-of-the-mainstream work of the late Carlo Scarpa has become even more influential, internationally, since his death. Aldo Rossi has transformed the definition and understanding of the city through his intensely personal observations, and while his limited production has spoken to an evocative, modernist formalism carried to a kind of out-of-time imagery (or typology), his most recent housing in West Berlin displays a surprising warmth and delicate detail as well as an assured, master hand. In this country, California's Frank Gehry is involved in the exploration of everything from skin to space, not so much reinventing the wheel as finding another way to make the vehicle go. Young architects on the West and the East coasts struggle with the same ideas and themes; somehow the far-out seems farther in out West and the gentle tutti-frutti colors suit the California sun. In Philadelphia, Robert Venturi is still the matchmaker of past and present in a challenging and unresolved marriage of art and thought that contains more grace and civilized intent than is commonly understood by those who profess to have gotten the message. All this puts to shame the stagy jokes, strained effects, and cheap tricks of the followers who would be leaders and those who have already led themselves into dead ends. Admittedly, some of them do their tricks quite well. And yes, there is a real postmodernism, if you look in the right places—most of them outside of New York.

In any number of cities and settings there are talented architects who are producing buildings that range from impressive to startling. Richard Meier, for example, has already attained master status with a fully developed style of modernist-derived planes and spaces as meticulously complex in their relationships as they are refined and uncompromising in color and finish. There are some, like Leon Krier, whose taste and ideals have helped as strong an architect as James Stirling move to a new technological-traditional synthesis of stunning originality. And there is always the possibility of still-evolving talent with the potential for significant contributions. But it is extremely unlikely that we will see this kind of innovation and change initiated in New York, even though architecture is essentially an urban act. New York's strength is its ability to attract and utilize the work of established achievers. Its reputation rests on the skill with which it puts together the packages that make both achievements and outrages possible. Its excitement is in the visceral vitality that continues to deny the outrages. Its beauty is in its critical mass, preferably seen from a height where the brutality is softened by the magic of changing light and the long shadows are abstract patterns across the grid.

If it is fashionable today to say that the process counts more than the product—an observation that is not without value—this makes the development game, with its extraordinary rules and players, its risks, wild cards, jackpots, and jokers, more important, and often more interesting, than the building. If beauty is in the eye of the beholder, which seems more likely than ever, in New York the deal is the most beautiful act and artifact of all—at least as long as the market, and the city, last.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Viennese Connection

New Books Coinciding with the "Vienna 1900" Exhibition at MOMA: July 3-Oct. 22, 1986

KOLO MOSER

Daniele Baroni and Antonio d'Auria. The striking work of Koloman Moser, a founding member and organizer of the Vienna Secession and an associate of Josef Hoffmann, is presented here in all its forms: posters, paintings, drawings, book illustrations from *Ver Sacrum*, metalwork, ceramics, glass, and furniture from the Wiener Werkstatte. 144 pages. 200 illus., 45 in color. Paper: $17.50 *August.*

VIENNA 1900

Franco Borsi and Ezio Godoli. A lavishly illustrated survey of turn-of-the-century Viennese architecture and the cultural milieu that inspired its masters: Otto Wagner, Olbrich, Hoffmann, Fabiani, many others. 320 pages. 300 illus., 26 in color. $45 *August.*

EGON SCHIELE

Serge Sabarsky. Considered pornographic in the 20's and 30's, Schiele's disturbing, haunting images manifest this enigmatic Expressionist's innermost feelings of sexuality, angst, and self-absorption. Four insightful essays explore Schiele's artistic development. 197 pages. 213 illus., 185 in color. $25 *Published.*

OSKAR KOKOSCHKA:

Drawings and Watercolors 1906-1924. *Serge Sabarsky. Essays by Hans Bisanz and Achille Bonito Oliva.* Critical analysis by three eminent art historians and an autobiographical sketch by this leading Viennese Expressionist put his art into historical perspective. 140 pages. 98 illus., 89 in color. Paper: $17.50 *Published.*

HUNDERTWASSER:

The Complete Graphic Work 1951-1986. *Walter Koschatzky.* The contemporary Austrian artist Hundertwasser has made an extraordinary contribution to the school of fantastic realism. His brightly colored and highly individual graphic works are published here for the first time. 216 pages. 100 color illus. $65. *October.*

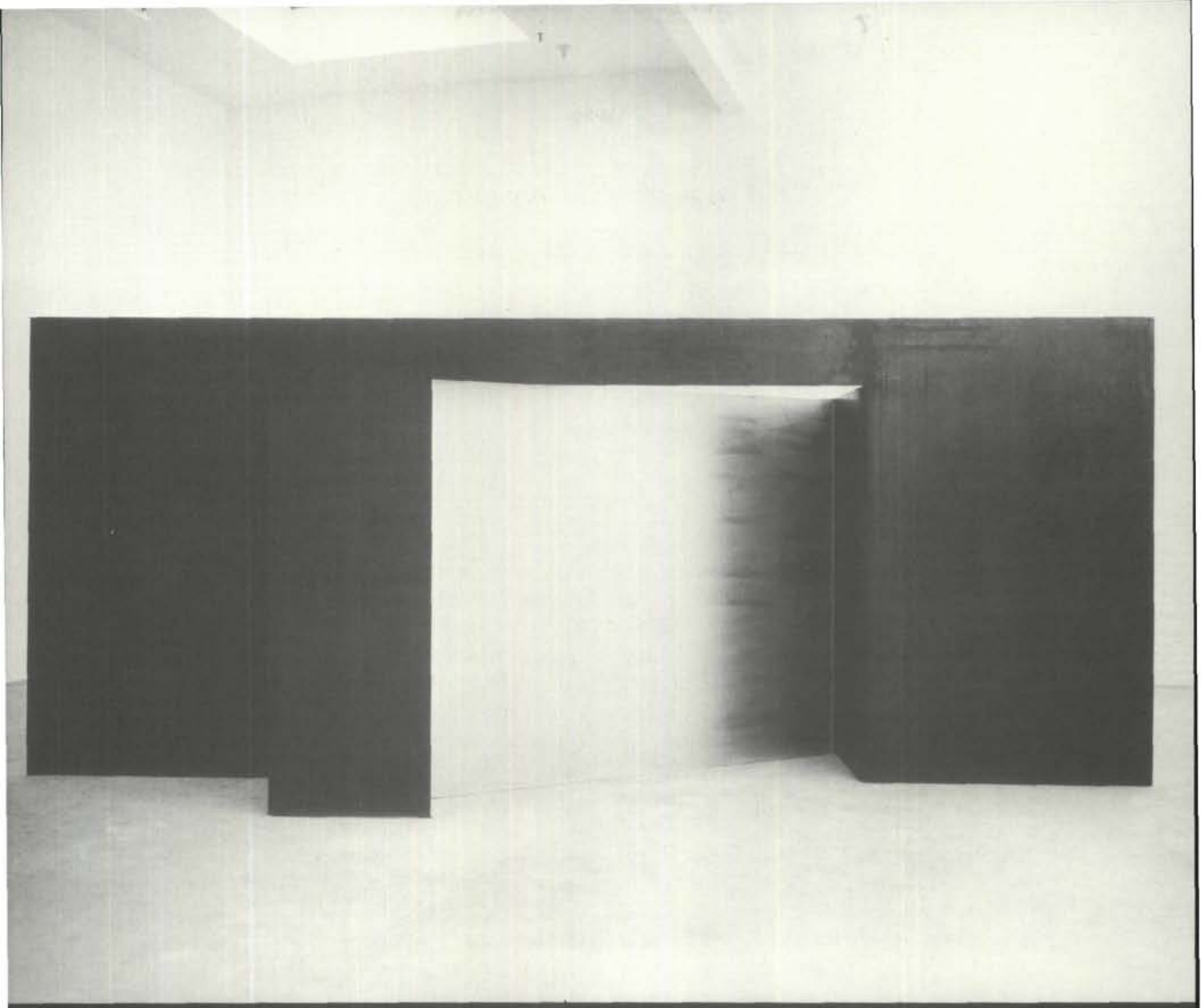
VIENNA IN THE BIEDERMEIER ERA

1815-1848. *Edited by Robert Waissenberger.* This sumptuous new study explores the fascinating Biedermeier period in over 300 illustrations and eleven essays by eminent art and social historians. 280 pages. 320 illus., 80 in color. $50 *October.*

RIZZOLI

597 Fifth Avenue/New York 10017

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Days on Blue, 1974-77, glass and steel, 84 x 209 x 55¼ inches (213 x 531 x 140 cm)

CHRISTOPHER WILMARTH

HIRSCHL & ADLER Modern

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

851 Madison Avenue New York, New York 10021 212 744-6700

Richard Koshalek

Richard Koshalek was born in Wausau, Wisconsin, in 1941. He holds degrees in architecture and art history from the University of Minnesota, and has been a curator at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, and director of the Fort Worth (Texas) Art Museum and the Hudson River Museum in Westchester County, New York. He has also served as assistant director of the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington. He is currently the director of The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles. This essay was co-authored by Sherri Geldin, the associate director of The Museum of Contemporary Art.

The very fact that *The New Criterion* has undertaken a national plebiscite on the subject of New York's claim to hegemony in the arts suggests that certain confidences and beliefs which are crucial to such a claim may already have begun to waiver. Not that New York's status as a leading force in the art world can reasonably be questioned. But the notion of leadership itself in this context bears greater scrutiny.

Specifically, is leadership the issue here, or are we actually speaking of predominance? The distinction appears to be fundamental in addressing the questions raised. Whereas "leadership" suggests being at the vanguard and setting a direction or course of activity, "predominance" suggests having superior strength and influence, though not necessarily occupying the point of origin.

Because of the sheer volume and density of art-related activity in New York, a virtually self-perpetuating sense of "leadership" has been bestowed from both within and without; it is fed by the very machinery that disseminates the ingredients of that leadership. There can be no doubt of the gravitational pull of New York's art nexus, whether it is evidenced by the plethora of museums, galleries, auction houses, publishing houses, and art schools, or by the disproportionately high number of artist residents. There has been and continues to be an infrastructure which encourages discourses on art, and then broadcasts them nationally and internationally. The magnetic field cast by New York has been for many years virtually inescapable at some point in an artist's career. But the almost inevitable pilgrimage to New York does not necessarily substantiate New York's "leadership." Rather it reinforces the distinction between leadership and predominance. Is New York truly at the forefront or has it simply exerted an overwhelming authority fueled by a well-oiled machine?

This question points toward yet another distinction which it may be useful to examine: that of primary versus secondary activity. It could be argued that, despite the aura of artistic leadership cast by New York, the city's perceived hegemony is largely of a secondary nature—that is, it exists in the realm of activities ancillary to the creation of art. The primary creative act of working as an artist can and does take place throughout the world, and not necessarily within an aesthetic framework dictated by New York. Yet anyone in quest of more than regional recognition has over the past few decades come to New York for the unique commercial, critical, and promotional promise which the city undeniably holds; New York remains integral to the process of artistic recognition on a national or international scale. But it is not necessarily central to the process of creation itself.

For the artist, the economic, psychological, and physical disadvantages of living in Manhattan (which are the same as those faced by non-artist residents) could be weakening New York's attraction in a fundamental sense. Because of these difficulties, and because we live in an era of ever more

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sophisticated international communications and ease of travel, artists living and working in cities throughout the world may be finding it less essential to migrate to New York City to accomplish their work. While many artists continue to find it desirable to participate in the cultural clearinghouse phenomenon that exists in New York City, their participation may be more for the sake of expediency than in pursuit of a uniquely creative influence.

In fact, it would seem that a "de-centering" of sorts has been occurring. We are witnessing not a simple relocation of the reigning cultural capital to another city but a new geographical plurality. This plurality is evidenced by recent developments scattered throughout the world, ranging over many disciplines. Examples of strong international impulses in painting can be seen in the work of German artists like Georg Baselitz, Markus Lupertz, Anselm Kiefer, and Sigmar Polke; in sculpture by British artists like Barry Flanagan, Richard Deacon, and Anish Kapoor; and in architecture by the increasingly influential industrial and graphic designers of Japan. Across this country, artists dealing with site-specific works such as Robert Irwin, Richard Fleischner, Siah Armajani, and James Turrell are creating works which find neither impetus, inspiration, nor sustenance in New York.

An intriguing corollary to this international activity is that museums beyond the boundaries of New York have increasingly shown greater awareness of and confidence in their ability to play an important part in the creative process. A newfound sense of independence and flexibility has come to characterize their approach, while New York institutions, it might be argued, have evolved into a certain complacency. With regard to exhibitions, a programmatic attitude, cultivated by New York institutions (particulary by the Museum of Modern Art) and subsequently adopted by museums internationally, has resulted in a predictable sameness among institutions. This sameness is gradually beginning to elicit a subtle but evident counterplan. Museums throughout the world are coming to assess their individual potentials, drawing inspiration from their indigenous cultural environment as well as from other art centers, as opposed to automatically pursuing a model which happens to be appropriate for New York.

It may be a natural and inevitable consequence of holding a leadership position (whether in the corporate, political, or cultural world) that the energy, drive, and sometimes reckless passion required to attain that position very often give way to a more protective and conservative stance. The tendency to rest comfortably at the pinnacle, preserving status and power, often develops at the expense of the very forces which created the ascendancy originally. To an extent, this phenomenon might explain the current state of New York's cultural "leadership": the so-called "decline" may be less due to diminished energies than to the redeployment of those energies toward a posture of defense, a guardianship of the status-quo.

"In fact, it would seem that a 'de-centering' of sorts has been occurring. We are witnessing not a simple relocation of the reigning cultural capital to another city but a new geographical plurality."

The growing complexity of running cultural institutions anywhere—the dramatically growing (and more vocal) public demand, the heightened journalistic scrutiny, the ever-escalating costs, the overlapping civic and commercial interests—undoubtedly accounts for a certain degree of overall concern in the museum world, and a gradual rethinking of the museum's role within contemporary society. Directors and curators who assume primary responsibility for programming have been distracted by these forces and have come to appear less focused and clear as to the proper institu-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tional direction. Precisely because New York City has such a concentration of museum activity, it may be experiencing these symptoms of change in a more intense manner than elsewhere.

Nonetheless, New York continues to support a uniquely cohesive art community, one that talks, debates, argues, publishes, collects and looks at art full time. It is a city that takes art seriously and that endlessly propels the dialogue. New York's other undeniable advantage is the presence of some of the most significant art ever made. Works like Picasso's *Demoiselles,* Matisse's *Piano Lesson,* Pollock's *Autumn Rhythm: Number 30* (1950), or Johns's *Three Flags* provide an experience that cannot be duplicated anywhere and a sense of artistic richness that cannot but convey a suggestion of "leadership."

The very complex and multi-layered cultural phenomenon which, over the course of centuries, seems to have successively bestowed upon certain cities an almost mythical cultural crown has clearly favored New York over the last four decades. Nevertheless, distant rumblings have been emanating from far afield which cannot be summarily dismissed as inconsequential, even accidental, bursts of regional creativity. It is a potent situation that bears watching.

Mimi Kramer

Mimi Kramer was born in New York in 1957. She attended Swarthmore College and Oxford University. She has worked on the staff of The New York Review of Books *for the last two years and has written for* The New York Times, The New Leader, *and* Harper's Bazaar. *Since 1983 she has been the regular theater critic for* The New Criterion. *She lives in New York.*

One of the funniest things I've heard recently was an explanation given to me by Bernard Gersten, executive producer of the Lincoln Center Theater, for why I couldn't see the revival of John Guare's *The House of Blue Leaves.* He said there were a lot of Tony Award voters who had to be accommodated. He said it casually, confidently, as though he were saying something reasonable. And he sounded busy, like a man with a lot of Tony Award voters on his mind. All the same, I thought it was funny. What was Bernard Gersten doing worrying about the Tony Awards? The Tony's, after all, are the theater industry's big annual promotional event, administered by the commercial theater and held primarily for the purpose of enhancing box-office sales. But Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts is one of New York City's leading cultural institutions. I couldn't help wondering, as I put the receiver down, whether wooing Tony Award votes is really Mr. Gersten's job.

I wrote Mr. Gersten a letter, stating clearly what I understood him to have told me on the phone; his reply made no attempt to clarify or explain. He said he was sending my letter on to the Broadway press agent handling public relations for the Beaumont and Newhouse theaters: ". . . and I will discuss the question of why—if you are the drama critic for *The New Criterion*—you are not provided with tickets to our plays." The letter went on: "If your interest in our work is more general and does not satisfy the criteria for press tickets, that is something that ultimately rests in his judgement." Again, I was mystified. My interest motivated by what? More general than what? (A publicity feature or a "blurb?") I put the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

letter down speculating on what a puzzling world it is. My "interest" in theater and Mr. Gersten's, I reflected, ought not to be all that different. I wrote for a serious arts journal, he worked for a serious arts institution: what was the problem? My job was to share with readers of *The New Criterion* my conviction that theater is somehow important to the community—an addled premise, perhaps, but one on which arts institutions are built. No, the more I thought about it, the more it seemed to me that my "interests" and Mr. Gersten's ought to be pretty much the same. Now I don't think *The New Criterion* is going to go broke purchasing tickets from Lincoln Center; and actually I quite like going to the theater as a civilian when there's a bought ticket to be had. (There wasn't in this case.) I raise the matter of Mr. Gersten's behavior because it seems to me to be part of a rather larger issue and more serious problem, namely the commercialization of New York's institutional theater.

That Broadway has become increasingly dependent on "non-profit" theater of late is fairly common knowledge. *Loot, Edwin Drood* and *Big River, Joe Egg* and *Sunday in the Park with George* are all examples of recent productions that had their origins in institutional theaters. The flip side of this development, however—the effect it has had on some of these institutions themselves—seems to have gone virtually unnoticed. The fact is, though, that Broadway's growing reliance on the "non-profit" sector has radically changed the nature of what is being produced there. More and more, the "little" theaters of Manhattan are ceasing to serve as cultural resources, centers for the fostering of developing art, and becoming showcases for commercial productions on their way to Broadway. What this means for New York audiences is fewer and fewer escapes from the uniformity and triviality of commercial theater. For theater itself it means fewer and fewer outlets for the unestablished artist or writer.

Make no mistake: I am speaking here not of the odd production that has the good fortune to move to Broadway, but of a wholesale change in outlook, a transformation of the notion of what it is that noncommercial theater exists to do. For some amount of "commercialization" is inevitable. An institution discovers a young Beth Henley or David Mamet; then Mamet and Henley grow up, win Pulitzer Prizes and become big business—and that is good. Presumably what one wants is for subsidized theater to influence popular taste, raising the general standard. It is when Beth Henley and David Mamet *as commodities* become the standard for what "little" theater should be producing that something has gone wrong. When the implicit thought behind artistic policy shifts from, "Let's throw this onstage and see if it works," to "Let's throw this onstage and see if it goes to Broadway." Which seems to be what is happening in New York.

Suddenly Playwrights Horizons is consistently producing elevator music. André Bishop has done nothing of any creative interest or significance there in two years and under his tutelage even good writers—like Ted Tally and Jonathan Reynolds—have been producing hackwork. At the Manhattan Theatre Club, long one of New York's most impressive outlets for interesting new work, Lynne Meadow seems suddenly to be devoted to yuppie comedy and contemporary revivals—which, two years ago, would have been Roundabout Theatre fare. Meanwhile, at the Roundabout, Gene Feist has developed an unaccountable taste for Broadway-type "star" vehicles and will have Jason Robards on his stage any minute if he's not careful.

Interestingly, as New York's "little" theaters come to look more and more alike—and more and more like Broadway—a new species of institution seems to be springing up to take their place, small neighborhood performing arts centers that operate much the way subscription theaters do but are not devoted exclusively to drama. Two institutions of this sort are Symphony Space on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, where "Selected Shorts," a wonderful series of short-story readings, has taken place for two

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

consecutive seasons, and the Vineyard Theatre on East Twenty-sixth Street, where this year's lovely and innovative musical adaptation of *Goblin Market* was first developed and performed. The two theaters are very different in character and approach: what they share, however, is an interest in exposing audiences to a wide variety of cultural experience—concerts, recitals, operas, plays, staged readings—and creating a community of audience-minded people.

From Barbara Zinn Krieger, Doug Aibel and Joe LoSchiavo at the Vineyard Theatre, and from Isaiah Sheffer, Allan Miller, Linda Rogers, and Kay Cattarulla at Symphony Space, the chaps at Lincoln Center could learn a lot about how to inspire large groups of people with the desire to take part in a cultural event. What makes one fear even for theaters like the Vineyard and Symphony Space is the prosperity factor, the depressing connection that seems to exist between an institution's commercialization and its success. One discovers a wonderful little institution and thinks, "Someone should give them a lot of money." Then somebody does and it changes the character of the place. Which isn't at all what's supposed to happen. It is, we are told, when Muses are suffering from undersubsidy that they take to the streets. One no longer knows what to wish for New York's institutional theater in order to wish it well.

"Why does prosperity, so often in New York, turn out to be the kiss of death? Why did the Roundabout Theatre and the Manhattan Theatre Club change so drastically when they moved to their elegant big new theaters at City Center and Union Square? Why was it just around the time that André Bishop was redecorating the lobby at Playwrights Horizons that the quality of production changed?"

Why does prosperity, so often in New York, turn out to be the kiss of death? Why did the Roundabout Theatre and the Manhattan Theatre Club change so drastically when they moved to their elegant big new theaters at City Center and Union Square? Why was it just around the time that André Bishop was redecorating the lobby at Playwrights Horizons that the quality of production changed? Fat, sleek theaters create fat, sleek expectations. But there is an abstract side to the problem as well. What we are witnessing is, in fact, a breakdown of the whole distinction between "non-profit" and "commercial" theater. The old definitions and boundaries have been smudged, worn away to the point where arts administrators are routinely engaging in practices that, but a short time ago, would have been unthinkable for employees of "not-for-profit" organizations: we have Bernard Gersten behaving like a Broadway mogul and Gregory Mosher planning to produce *The Front Page* and *Anything Goes* at Lincoln Center.

Of course, Gersten's preoccupation with the Tony Awards and Mosher's sudden interest in Cole Porter are really direct descendants of *A Chorus Line*. It was Joe Papp who first discovered that "non-profit" theater was a potentially marketable item. But having said that Joe Papp is partly responsible for the condition we now find our institutional theater suffering from, we have to give credit where credit is due and keep sight of a few distinctions. Joe Papp has, in addition to a lack of regard for rules and conventions, a remarkable gift for taking what is arguably non-commercial material and making it sell. He also has five stages—six, including the one in the Park—which means that he has the physical capacity to produce both commercial and non-commercial theater, using one to subsidize the other. Lynne Meadow, Gene Feist, and André Bishop have not that luxury. Gregory Mosher at Lincoln Center has not that luxury.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What is wrong with Bernard Gersten's preoccupation with Tony Awards is wrong in practice and theory both. The purpose of subsidized theater is to free theater from the constraints imposed on it by the commercial market. To free it from having to worry about the Tony Awards and rave reviews from Frank Rich. If Lincoln Center continues to try to market theater as a commodity as Messrs. Mosher and Gersten are doing now—subscribing to commercial standards and practices—what Lincoln Center will wind up with is a Broadway audience. And I don't think that's what Lincoln Center really wants.

What makes me think so is something Isaiah Sheffer said in his closing remarks to the audience on the last night of the short-story series at Symphony Space this year. He said that in order to understand the success of the program you'd have to have stood in the green room Wednesday night after Wednesday night and overheard what the actors had to say about the audience: "Who are those people? Where did you get them? They really listen!" I keep thinking about one particular actor Mr. Sheffer told us about: he was appearing in a Broadway show and wanted to rent the Symphony Space audience to replace the crowds of restless, irritable people he had to play to every night, or so Mr. Sheffer said.

I don't think Gregory Mosher really wants an audience made up of people who decide what to see on the basis of what has won the most Tony Award nominations. But audiences like those at Symphony Space don't come into existence as if by magic; they are created by people like Isaiah Sheffer. Maybe theater at Lincoln Center should be more about creating audiences than creating "hits." Actually, I think the audience Mosher wants at Lincoln Center is the one he started out with at the beginning of the season: the people who came to see David Mamet's two one-act plays in spite of some pretty bad reviews. I spent an afternoon with some of those people, one Saturday toward the end of the run, and two things about them stick in my mind. One is the sound they made as the lights blacked out at the end of the second play, an extraordinary waft of noise that went halfway round the theater before you realized it was the audience gasping. The other is the way they lingered outside the theater. I'd never seen an audience linger that way after a play or heard a sound like that go up at the end of one. And coming up into the sunlight, I remember thinking that was exactly what institutional theater should do—make an audience gasp and linger—and days afterward being high on the image of a bunch of people standing in front of gym lockers talking and arguing about something they'd seen in the theater.

I wouldn't have missed seeing the Mamet plays on half-price tickets, with a real audience, for anything. What I hope for, more than to be put on Mr. Gersten's press list, is that he and Mr. Mosher, before too long, will devote some attention to creating at the Beaumont and Newhouse what the other buildings in the Lincoln Center complex already have and what places like the Vineyard Theatre and Symphony Space have done so much to create: a sophisticated and casually theater-going audience. After all, as some of those older, more established institutional theaters perhaps die out or roll into a useless old age, there will be new ones to take their place. They will need doctrine. They will need a reason for existing. It ill becomes Lincoln Center not to provide it for them.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Samuel Lipman

Samuel Lipman was born in California in 1934. He was educated at San Francisco State College, the University of California at Berkeley, and the Juilliard School in New York. At Berkeley he was a Woodrow Wilson Fellow and a teaching assistant in political science. As a musician, his teachers included Lev Shorr, Alexander Libermann, Darius Milhaud, Pierre Monteux, and Rosina Lhevinne. In 1975 he gave the New York premiere of the Elliott Carter Piano Concerto. Since 1977 he has been the music critic for Commentary, *and since its founding has been the Publisher of* The New Criterion. *He is the author of* Music After Modernism *(1979) and* The House of Music *(1984), and he has received three ASCAP-Deems Taylor Awards for criticism. He is a member of the National Council on the Arts in Washington and the artistic director of the Waterloo Music Festival. He has lived in New York City since 1959.*

A new element has now been added to the accusations against New York: the charge that culture itself, the longest lived if also the least tangible expression of a city's power, is in a serious and perhaps terminal condition because of the direction New York real estate has taken over the last decades. On this reading, the enmity shown by the city fathers is not directed simply at the poor and the minorities, or even at an exploited working class; it is directed at the arts and at their creators and custodians, the artists. Thus *The Village Voice* blossomed in the middle of May with the catchy cover headline, in two-inch-high caps: "NEW YORK TO THE ARTS: DROP DEAD." The better-mannered *New York Times* had gotten in on the act too, by coming out a bit earlier with a lead "Arts and Leisure" section article on the pressures a booming real-estate market was putting on New York theater. I might add that both publications, following their custom of keeping news columns and advertising practices separate, carried, along with these articles about the plight of the arts, their customary bounty of ads for posh condominiums in arty neighborhoods.

For many years now it has been possible to write whole symphonies from the assorted taps and death knells being sounded each minute of the writing day for every aspect of New York's future. For those of an impeccably agrarian orientation, New York has always been one of the Cities of the Plain, imminently subject to God's condemnatory edict; for the apocalyptic Left, New York has been at once the running sore of capitalism and the pot in which the future of progressive mankind will be cooked.

The genealogy of the doomsayers goes back at least to the reformers of the Gilded Age and the muckrakers of Progressivism. The malefactors held responsible for the mess in Gotham have always been corrupt politicians and newly enriched real-estate interests; more recently the symbol of the triumphant union of these nefarious beings has become the automobile, the very center of the American dream.

The spate of news in the last few months about what appears to be the involvement of much of the elected and appointed leadership of New York City in massive graft shows that corruption is still very much with us. The real-estate industry is as always the target of those whose self-appointed task it is to preserve their own idea of the metropolis. The charge of speculative and unplanned overbuilding leveled against the real-estate industry in New York is a constant theme, running from Daniel M. Friedenberg's piece in the 1961 "New York, N.Y." issue of the socialist journal *Dissent* to the current populist campaign against gentrification and new luxury condominiums. Similarly, the past twenty-five years have been full of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

demand for the elimination of private driving from Manhattan; there is a straight line connecting Percival and Paul Goodman's impassioned plea for such a ban in the very same issue of *Dissent* with the now successful fight against the Westway super-highway project.

One would hardly want to say that life in New York these days is comfortable. The sheer pressure of numbers is indeed often intolerable. Furthermore, we should not be surprised that along with the desire of many people to live in what can never be more than a finite amount of space go all the other afflictions of city life: traffic, social tensions, and everywhere an underclass, sometimes merely apathetic and sometimes actively hostile to what they see as the privileged life going on around them.

There is no way of being sure that the dire prophecies about New York will not, in the absence of the various radical nostrums being urged, one day be proven right. Still, all the evidence till now suggests that, far from being moribund, New York is at the height of its attractiveness as a place for the brightest, for the richest, and for the most energetic of the world's most mobile inhabitants to live. Surely this is the meaning of the prolonged real-estate boom which has seen living space in Manhattan, as always New York's commercial and intellectual center, continue to be unaffordable for all except older residents protected by rent control and those successful newcomers willing and able to put up with high rents for cramped quarters.

All this is merely the story throughout history of the rise of cities and the response to that rise of those who were, or felt themselves to be, dispossessed, or who anyway always wanted to live somewhere else. In any case, as perhaps the pre-eminent world city of the twentieth century, New York can hardly be expected to be safe from those for whom the very idea of a cosmopolis is repugnant.

New York has always been frightfully expensive, for artists as for everyone else. A glance at two American novels, the first set in the early Nineties and the second at the turn of the century, demonstrates how little matters have changed in this regard: both William Dean Howells's *The Coast of Bohemia* (1893) and James Huneker's *Painted Veils* (1920) show their heroines, one a painter and the other a singer, coming from the provinces to New York in search of art and finding the cost of food and lodging exorbitant. When I came to New York in 1959 to study at Juilliard, I found housing almost unobtainable and, even when located, available only at something more than double the going rate I had known in San Francisco. I have heard the same story from those who came to the city just after World War II.

The memories of a New York cheap for artists and intellectuals to live and work in, like so much else in our cultural pipedreams, come from the sordid era of the Great Depression when, though prices were cheap, people had no money whatsoever. The test of survival for artists in the 1930s was a few coins for a meal; today the test is a stable income, adequate housing, and even health benefits and pension plans. To note this is not to disparage the desirability or the justice of these newer expectations; it is merely to point out that rather more is being demanded today in the way of hospitality from the urban environment than was dreamt of fifty years ago.

But whether or not their demands are immediately answered, the artists and writers—and those thinkers too independent for the padded cells of academe—still come. Along with the yuppies and what the *Voice* (with its customary decency toward its targets of abuse) refers to as "Eurotrash," creative figures realize all too well that only New York, of all the cities in America and perhaps of all the great cities in the world, provides what must be called the critical mass necessary for intellectual life.

In my own field of music, I know that the pull of New York remains as powerful as ever for Americans, if not indeed more powerful. Successful New York recitals and orchestral appearances are still, for instrumentalists, the *sine qua non* for a career in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the rest of the United States; well-received engagements at the Metropolitan Opera are still the *fons et origo* of operatic fame everywhere else in the country. The same, moreover, is true for such compositional success as is available to anyone these days; a New York performance is a model to be repeated other places, while a performance in Boston or Philadelphia or San Francisco is just that—a performance in Boston or Philadelphia or San Francisco. On the top level of professional training, Juilliard, despite the uncertainty of its course over the past decade, remains the school of choice for the most talented young musicians in America and perhaps everywhere else this side of the Soviet Union. Employment opportunities for free-lance orchestral musicians, though under pressure from the competition of synthesizer-produced artificial music, remain the envy of the rest of the country.

"The power of New York, contrary to its critics, comes from the brute economic strength they despise. But because of that strength, there is talent here, and the money to back it, to burn."

It would be nice for me, confirmed New Yorker that I now am, to be able to say that all this activity and pre-eminence stems from the simple fact that the performance and composition of serious music are in wonderful shape here, and that music education is in a golden age. But I cannot say this. In fact, the performance level of major New York musical institutions seems to me low, both absolutely and relative to what goes on outside the city.

Nowhere is this more clear than in the orchestral field, where the New York Philharmonic, despite the unwillingness of those responsible for its fate to open their ears, is now the sick man of the American orchestral world. The Metropolitan Opera combines boring repertory with variable casting and mostly indifferent conductorial leadership, while the City Opera, under the cult of Beverly Sills's personality, serves up a mix of dollar-opera and middle-of-the-road avant-garde trifles. The future of Juilliard, under a new president, is at the present time unclear; whatever its exact direction, it would seem that the Juilliard of tomorrow will resemble more an elite college school of music than the distinctively New York trainer of putative geniuses it was in the past. The new music menu being served uptown these days seems about the same as is available in other places; the far-out new-music scene downtown, for me at least the domain of lost causes, is said by those who know—among them John Rockwell, the *Times*'s expert in such matters—to be of less interest than is such activity in other parts of the United States.

The result of all this busyness without corresponding excellence of achievement is that New York's musical influence on the United States as a whole is a function not of its quality but of its size. Because both the electronic and print media are so powerfully concentrated here, what New York wants to sell is perforce bought, more or less irrespective of its content. This operation of a cultural Gresham's law may be seen at its most potent in the prominence of Lincoln Center institutions and personalities in the musical presentations of public television. It is not simply a matter of the overexposure on PBS of the now sadly second-rate Philharmonic, or of the carte blanche given the Metropolitan Opera's James Levine to be America's television *primo maestro assoluto.* The Lincoln Center mystique also travels: as I write these words PBS is presenting a lifelessly performed John Philip Sousa program emanating from Wolf Trap (the overballeyhooed and mediocre performing-arts facility just outside Washington, D.C.) with—surprise—Beverly Sills as the uncomprehending hostess.

The result of this stranglehold is that we have little if any chance to see on television such great orchestras as the Cleveland and the Chicago, or such important opera com-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

panies as San Francisco or, in the summer, Santa Fe. Similarly, the continuing fact of *The New York Times*'s complaisant treatment of major New York city musical institutions only assists in selling to a national audience the vicious circle of local shortcomings.

I don't think that much can be done to take from New York the national cultural primacy it has had since the decline of Boston well back in the nineteenth century; it has that primacy not because of specific achievements but because of its size and economic power. The power of New York, contrary to its critics, comes from the brute economic strength they despise. But because of that strength, there is talent here, and the money to back it, to burn. The pity of it all is that the real resources of the city, so much greater than anything in the imagining of its present detractors, could be used to lead with excellence rather than level with mediocrity. But mediocrity, I suppose, sells in a way excellence does not; at the very least it makes fewer enemies. So once again, it comes down to something simple: what is lacking in New York musical life is courage.

Jed Perl

Jed Perl was born in New York City in 1951 and has a bachelor of arts degree from Columbia College and a master of fine arts degree from Brooklyn College. He writes regularly on contemporary art for The New Criterion, *and has also written for* Arts Magazine, Art in America, Aperture, The New Republic, *and* Vogue. *He is currently at work on a study of French art since World War I, to be published by North Point Press in Berkeley, California. He lives in New York.*

For the artist and the critic, a sense of value, though ultimately based on something like instinct, is shaped by a multitude of encounters with works of art and ideas about art. The experience of older and newer images and ideas, good and bad, and of other people's reactions to them: all these—together, of course, with one's reactions to one's own work and other people's reactions to it—form a constant, day-by-day accretion of minute judgments that build toward a view, a taste. The difference between the culture of the capital and that of the provinces—between high taste and provincial taste—is that in the capital one's experience of the best and the worst and everything in between is more complete than in the provinces. One is challenged in a greater variety of ways, and thus has the possibility of developing a sense of value that goes deeper and nourishes, finally, a more complex sense of culture.

In New York this broad, deep kind of experience is possible, though its relation to public visual-arts culture—the culture of the museums, galleries, and magazines—is tangential at best. Culture in New York is two-sided: the city produces both a genuine high culture and a variety of mass-market simulacra. True culture is a community of the like-minded, who tend to reject institutions in favor of a mental landscape composed of valuable works of art and ideas. The size of the true-culture community doesn't change much over the years. False culture, though, grows very quickly: since its canons of taste derive not from experience but from orthodoxy, the false-culture establishment can keep multiplying, sending out clones in much the manner of a fast-food chain. False culture swamps the provinces, where what-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ever authentic culture exists is too weak to hold its own.

False culture is, at this point, probably very close to kitsch culture: both are forms of mass-marketed sentiment. True culture can produce good and bad works, good and bad ideas; but false culture can produce nothing of value. False culture is constantly proposing new orthodoxies: of the post-modern, the Neo-Expressionist, the photo-derived. These instant-orthodoxies make culture feel available, comfortable, when in fact one of the characteristics of high culture at its very highest is the avoidance of orthodoxies. New York is perhaps the only place left where the concentration of experience is great enough to dissolve orthodoxy.

The best art coming out of New York is born of a sense that all prescriptive concepts of culture have failed, and that high culture is now highest when it functions as a dissident attempt to reinvent tradition. True high culture continues, but underground. Everything authentic is marginal to the culture establishment. Value has become a private matter, a victory of the singular imagination. Good Constructivist sculpture is as marginal as good narrative painting. In New York in the 1980s quality and marginality are converging. (Which isn't, of course, to say that marginal art is necessarily art of quality.)

If there's a sanity about authentic high culture in New York today, it's born of the end of illusions—it's a sanity which comes from our having bottomed out. I know quite a few artists and critics who have at one time or another in the past twenty years believed the culture establishment was going to wake up to authentic culture. There was a time in the 1960s when some artists thought a new, vital representational painting would turn the establishment around; a decade later, a return to abstract painting was forecasted to do the same thing. But every innovation within authentic high culture has been (to use a word from the 1960s) co-opted. The mass market for high culture has emptied each authentic innovation of content, and assimilated it as a strategy, a pose.

Many people today express disappointment at the ways in which major museums and large-circulation art magazines represent the visual arts. Everyone accuses everyone else of either trendiness or stodginess; but much of this complaint seems grounded in a peculiar attitude of passivity. Why should a museum or an art magazine lead the way? The magazines and museums have their good moments; but to expect the Museum of Modern Art or *Art in America* to present a convincing picture of high visual-arts culture is to expect an institution to have an *imagination,* which is impossible. We do, though, have a right to expect imagination from people, and what may be most troubling now is our growing inability to imagine the art scene as being any way but the way it is. (This is the bad side of the end of illusions.)

I fear for the best of the artists who are now at the threshold of middle age, because though their art is growing, their careers are stymied. Galleries are booming—they seem able to pay any overhead imaginable. Still, there isn't one gallery in New York which is really committed to the high visual-arts culture of the best younger artists of the 1980s. What's startling about the newer galleries is their provincialism: a provincialism not just of attitude, but of product. The younger artist who exhibits in a New York gallery is very often taken on because he or she has already made a splash in Washington or San Francisco or Chicago with imitations of whatever the establishment is pushing at the time. Artists are shown and sold and reviewed whom nobody with real taste cares about, while artists of the deepest culture can't get in the gallery door.

The swelling of the false-culture community is filling up many of the openings there used to be for authentic visual art. During the expansion of higher education in the 1950s and 1960s academia became, in certain cases, a safe haven for visual-arts culture. Many brilliant, original artists managed to carve out for themselves influential places in the art teaching world either in New York or close enough to sustain New

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

York careers. Now even the most cold-blooded false-culture careerist has difficulty getting a permanent position, and academia has ceased to provide a place for artists of genuine culture. A generation is unable to use academic channels to get to the next generation—to carry the message on. Worse yet: the boutiquification of art education in America—the transformation of every art school into a kind of lecture and workshop circuit for the icons of the magazines and the pizzazzy galleries—means that even if the college-age population does expand in the next fifteen years there will be no real jobs to apply for.

"New York is perhaps the only place left where the concentration of experience is great enough to dissolve orthodoxy."

The impossibility of obtaining substantial support in either the gallery or academic worlds has turned many brilliant painters and sculptors into a hardened resistance. If there's anything good artists know today, it's that you can't fight the culture market and win. The best artists have given up on public discourse and taken private positions. New York is an occupied city—a city occupied by false culture. And authentic culture is functioning as a resistance without illusions, a resistance whose saving grace is its freedom of spirit. When you're living underground you don't need to bother about the follies of the galleries, museums, and magazines, because they constitute a world you didn't make and for which you'll never be held responsible. The people I respect go to 420 West Broadway and other such places rarely, and then only to check on how the occupation forces are amusing themselves.

Establishment culture, reflecting perhaps its own sense of purposelessness and waste, likes to represent the New York of the 1980s as a frieze of warring ambitions and hardened pluralisms. Are the occupation forces bored with their own power? Maybe so; but boredom doesn't necessarily lead to change. Whether the situation of high culture today is better or worse than in the past, whether it will improve or deteriorate: these questions are rarely asked by those who live the life of high culture day by day. Nostalgia and millenarianism are anathema to artists; high culture, like anything we experience intensely, is experienced in the present. What is certain is that the hegemony of Abstract Expressionism, the triumphs of Pop and Minimalism (as well as the current reputations of Fifty-seventh Street and West Broadway), are, from the point of view of genuine high culture in New York, utterly meaningless. The fashionable rediscovery of Europe—both in its Neo-Expressionist and neo-traditionalist phases—is likewise a faked-up thing, a phenomenon of the culture industry. High culture isn't rediscovering Europe—it has never forgotten it. The artists I admire are looking beyond the myth of postwar American art, to Europe. (None of the Abstract Expressionists—with the exception of Hofmann, who was of course a European—is having a significant effect on major art today.) Artists are looking to the greatest living painter, Balthus—and to Arp, Bonnard, the Delaunays, Dufy, de Chirico, Giacometti, Hélion, Kandinsky, Klee, Masson, Matisse, Miró, Mondrian, Morandi, Picasso. For high culture in New York, tradition continues to mean European tradition. But European tradition now looks like an oasis in a desert—an oasis to which artists make their own zig-zag paths.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Art Students League of New York

215 W. 57th St., N.Y.C. 10019
(212) CIrcle 7-4510

Founded 1875

R.A. Florio, Executive Director

Announcing the 112th Regular Session beginning September 15 and continuing through May 23, 1987.

Anyone can register for classes at the League—there are no entrance requirements. Students may register at any time. Tuition is by the month and need never be for longer periods.

The sixty-five well-known professional artists who teach at the League represent points of view and styles ranging from the conservative and/or traditional to the modernist and avant-garde. Most classes have life models.

Four sessions of classes daily—A.M., P.M., Late P.M. and Evening. Saturday classes for children and adults. Evening lectures on subjects of interest to artists and art students.

Life Drawing, Anatomy, Painting, Sculpture, Illustration, Graphics (Intaglio, Lithography, Woodcut, Silkscreen, etc.). Landscape Painting, Portraiture, Still Life, Abstract Art, etc.

There are classes which meet only once or twice a week—in the evenings. However most classes at the League meet five days a week. Write or telephone for free, illustrated catalogue. (The Summer School continues until August 29.)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TATISTCHEFF

Kent Bellows

Portrait of Rachel, 1985

Graphite pencil on paper. 19" x 17"

50 WEST 57TH

NEW YORK, NY 10019

212 664-0907

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

William Phillips

William Phillips was born in New York and studied at City College and New York University. He was one of the founding editors of Partisan Review *in 1934, and continues to edit the magazine from Boston today. He has served on the faculties of several universities, and is currently professor of English at Boston University. Among his books are* A Sense of the Past, *a collection of essays, and* A Partisan View, *a volume of memoirs. He divides his time between Boston and New York.*

That the culture of New York has changed —as has that of the rest of the country, and, for that matter, Western Europe, too—can no longer be in question. The question is why and how. One is tempted to say for the worse, but one is restrained by the awareness that every period thinks civilization has declined. The past always has been thought to be better. However, how can this be reconciled with the widespread belief that the material and cultural condition of the West has been steadily advancing—or with the popular idea of progress? (One is reminded of T. S. Eliot's saying that art does not progress, that modern art is no better than the art of the past. He also replied to those who say we know more now than was known in the past: the past is that which we know.) This is not the occasion to try to resolve this apparent contradiction, but it is worth noting that both wholesale celebrations and dismissals of an era are equally facile cultural generalizations.

In any event, I think that in addition to the usual problems of historical comparison, the differences are so great that it is especially difficult to contrast the New York of today as an artistic and cultural center with the New York of yesterday. In fact, it would appear that the cultural continuity not only of New York but of the United States and the West as a whole has been broken in our time. When the break began is hard to say, for the process has been gradual, as most historical changes are that are not the result of violent revolutions. It is not a matter, as some claim, that modernism or the avant-garde is being parodied now, though that is true, or that the conditions of life or the appearance of the city are no longer the same. A decisive transformation of the kind that usually marks the beginning of a new epoch has taken place. And if it is not always seen as such, it may be because most traditional history is rooted in the idea of continuity—or perhaps because critics are afraid that a candid view of the present situation might be dismissed as too negative or elitist.

One important change is that the universities throughout the country have drained off many writers and artists, and have, themselves, become centers of intellectual—or perhaps I should say scholarly—activity. On the whole, it might be said that the powerful influence of the academy on literary criticism and social thought has tended to make those disciplines more specialized and academic. As a result, there is a split between the literary theorists concentrated in the universities and the more social-minded and less theoretical critics, many of whom live in New York.

But this is only one aspect of the situation. Perhaps even more important is what might be called the homogenization of the culture, which is largely a result of the dominating and leveling force of the media. Its influence, which has gone hand-in-hand with the growing affluence of the middle class—and the skilled working class which has joined the middle class—is particulary visible in New York. New York has become a prosperous middle-class city sitting on top of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a jungle. And the big media (that is, the movies, television, the chic commercial magazines) have produced an appearance of cultural unity—of values, tastes, assumptions, and political opinions—that did not exist before. At the same time, the broad base of the media and their drive to keep up with the appetite for change they have created have brought considerable confusion of opinion and uncertainty about intellectual and artistic criteria. To be sure, it is hard to know which is the cause and which the effect, for there generally has been a lowering of standards in the name of democracy. The main casualty has been the often divided but distinctive intellectual and artistic community that in the past gave New York its importance as a cultural center and distinguished it from the more general culture promoted by the large media.

These changes, in addition to their effect on the arts, make living in New York more difficult today for young writers and painters who have no money. It is possible, though admittedly difficult, to find a cheap apartment. But that is not the main problem. Delmore Schwartz and William Barrett, for example—and countless others—lived on the top floor of a walk-up that was then called a cold-water flat, which meant it had no heat, the bathtub was in the kitchen, the toilet in the outer hall. However, this was an accepted way of life for most young writers and painters, who assumed they belonged to a community for whom poverty was neither a creative blessing nor a shame, but simply part of the state of apprenticeship, a necessary condition for beginners. Poverty was not unrespectable. Painters hung out at the Cedar Bar on University Place, where they talked all night and ate and drank for almost nothing; writers gossiped and argued about art and politics in Stewart's Cafeteria on Sheridan Square for ten cents, the price of coffee and cake, or got high on cheap booze at the White Horse Tavern on Hudson Street.

Many writers and painters today live uptown, or in the Hamptons, as befits their having "made it." But in the Thirties and Forties, when my generation was starting out, most of us lived in the Village, which had the quality of a small town, separate from the rest of Manhattan. It used to be said of some writers that they never strayed north of Fourteenth Street. I, myself, was brought up and went to school in the Bronx, which was then like a Jewish and Italian suburb of Manhattan, still sparsely settled and full of open spaces. My first emigration was to City College on 137th Street and Convent Avenue, but that was only for the day, for I returned at night to the security of my dormitory town, the Bronx. My second migration was to the vaunted bohemia of the Village, soon after I was graduated from City College.

"The change is also political. Stalinism had attracted many intellectuals and invaded the media. But a serious part of the cultural community stood outside the world of the media and of fashionable politics. Today the knee-jerk, lib-Left views that have become a staple of the media—and of the academic mind, in and out of New York—make up a good deal of 'enlightened' opinion, even in the supposedly sophisticated atmosphere of New York."

The change is also political. Stalinism had attracted many intellectuals and invaded the media. But a serious part of the cultural community stood outside the world of the media and of fashionable politics. Today the knee-jerk, lib-Left views that have become a staple of the media—and of the academic mind, in and out of New York—make up a good deal of "enlightened" opinion, even in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the supposedly sophisticated atmosphere of New York.

This is not to deny individual creative and critical talent, particularly among the somewhat older writers, painters, and critics, mostly the survivors of an earlier period. And some new communities are being formed by conservatives, and by liberal anti-Communists disturbed by the spread of mindless-Left attitudes. But much of the new writing and painting, some of it gifted, reflects the homogenization of the culture and the resulting lack of a distinctive vision of the human predicament. The important fiction of the past dealt with ideas as well as with experience and often reached its high moments at the intersections of ideological and psychological forces. Much recent fiction, however—with the notable exception of dissident writing from the Soviet orbit and some Latin American novels—has an incestuous quality of self-dissection, as it explores ever more minute and personal events. (Many writers now live outside New York, but those in New York share the general malaise.) Contemporary painting, which I am not qualified to judge professionally, strikes me, nevertheless, as anarchic and lacking direction. So, too, the most fashionable new critical theory, deconstruction, imported from France, but now rooted here in the academy, questions the idea of central standards and meanings in a literary text, and rejects the idea of any single authority or truth. It is a philosophy and a critical method that is essentially skeptical and nihilist.

There also has been a major cultural shift in the growth of a cult of the movies. Indeed, most young people have become part of a movie culture that has challenged the values of the predominant literary culture of the past. Many of them have become involved in "progressive" documentaries and in bizarre multi-media experiments. The effect on critical thinking of the youth culture, which has flourished in New York, has been to create a cultural atmosphere that somehow combines populism, commercialism, and the worship of novelty—all adding up to an advanced type of kitsch.

Hence it is something of a miracle that in the midst of a wave of intellectual pluralism and geographic dispersal New York still should have a good deal of its earlier vitality and its cultural appeals. After all, the major intellectual and literary journals are published in New York. (My own magazine is now issued at Boston University.) One may not agree with some of their editorial positions, but their very presence in New York is a reminder of the fact that the city is still an intellectual capital, in the way that Paris and London, and other European cities, are. In addition, what is left of traditional nonacademic literary and art criticism is concentrated largely in New York.

Essentially, what distinguishes New York from other cities, and from university communities, despite the enormous changes in the way it looks and the way it thinks, is the concentration of writers, painters, and intellectuals who cut across academic disciplines and fashions. Traditionally, this has created the kind of ferment that generated new ideas and new aesthetic movements. But, just as the future of our national political and intellectual culture is somewhat problematic, so that of New York raises many aesthetic questions.

I, myself, divide my time between Boston and New York. Boston is a lovely city, a soft one, like Paris and San Francisco, and one welcomes its distance from the media bustle and babble, and the congestion, of New York, and its quiet atmosphere of learning. On the other hand, New York is a hard city, like London and Berlin, a city of raw nerves; its intellectual openness and fluidity and its relative freedom from both provincialism and academicism creates a state of permanent stimulation—which presumably is better for the spirit than for the psyche. If New York is not an easy city, still that is the price one pays for living in any one of the overgrown Western capitals.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Alan Rich

Alan Rich was born in Boston in 1924 and studied at Harvard University and the University of California at Berkeley. He has worked as a music critic on a wide variety of publications, including The New York Herald Tribune, The New York Times, *and* New York *magazine. He is currently the music critic for* Newsweek. *He is the author of* Careers and Opportunities in Music, Music: Mirror of the Arts, *and* The Lincoln Center Story. *He lives in Los Angeles.*

Funny you should ask.

In 1978 I laughed out loud at a job offer from Los Angeles. I was at the time music critic at *New York* magazine, a job that offered comfort and identity in, I thought, the only city in America for anyone involved in serious music. Leave that behind for the glitzy beguilements of some outpost in a well-known cultural desert? Ha-ha.

A year later I was happily employed in Los Angeles. I had, in the interim, taken a couple of trips West and learned a thing or two about California that I'd somehow missed before, most of all that it had become a state of great and admirable artistic growth: important resident leaders for its symphony orchestras, important spirits making new music, important progressive educational ventures to guide the growth of young performers and composers. I began to hear a few false overtones in the folk tunes sung by the old New York grannies, the songs about outpost and desert and the danger of turning into a vegetable under the Western sun: a little envy, perhaps, a little self-protection, perhaps more than a little provincialism. It might be of some value, I began to think, to send some updated news about the West Coast to those Eastern naysayers.

Now I'm tied on salary to a magazine based in New York. When *Newsweek* called with the job offer three years ago, it was worded: "If we let you stay on in Los Angeles, would you be our music critic?"—a self-answering question if ever one was. I sold my house on the Hudson to make the down payment on a more modest place in West Los Angeles. I type my stuff into a home computer in a room that commands a view of my hot tub and my neighbor's orange tree, push a couple of keys, and the copy is in my editor's terminal at Madison and Fiftieth within minutes. *The New York Times* arrives on my doorstep every morning, in an edition mangled and cut down for the locals from its New York counterpart, but with its good gray editorial page and its soporific critics still recognizable. When I drive to the Music Center for a concert it costs two bucks to park my car; the last time I tried it at Lincoln Center it was fifteen. The daily mail brings the same news that I used to get in New York: press releases about upcoming New York events—and also events in St. Louis, Santa Fe, Seattle, and Stuttgart. I toss some of them, read the others, and make the same decisions about which concerts and operas to attend as I did when I lived in New York. A recital at Carnegie Hall that looks interesting may also be happening at the Los Angeles Music Center a week or two later; a new singer at the Met may have already been singing for years at the San Francisco Opera. The physical process of getting from my house in West L.A. to a concert at Lincoln Center takes a little more time, but no more actual effort, than it would if I were still at my house in Nyack; it costs more, but that's someone else's concern. I don't even have to shed a tear, in fact, over the house in Nyack; the guy who bought it insists that I maintain visiting privileges—partly because he's an old friend and partly because I know more about fixing the plumbing than he does.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I may not, therefore, be the right one to ask about the importance of New York to my life; I see myself as a fairly successful "poly-coastal." Yet I don't kid myself. My life in serious music hangs from strings, and their other ends are tied and jiggled in New York, home of music managements, of record companies, of publications whose news and opinions matter to the health of the art. The means of connecting me to those power bases—telephone lines, computer terminals, Express Mail—have become more sophisticated over the years, but they are the life-support system without which I cannot survive. I could conceivably placate my editors at *Newsweek* with decent weekly articles that didn't require my physical presence in New York; there's plenty of good copy in symphony orchestras in Chicago, Philadelphia, and Cleveland (any one of which happens at the moment to play rings around the New York Philharmonic), and I could fill in the other weeks with record reviews, rave notices about the San Francisco Opera, and sad human-interest accounts of the attempts to start a company in Los Angeles. But would that cut my ties with New York's musical managements? Where do you think the soloists for those out-of-New-York orchestras and opera companies got booked? Who produced those records? And—even more to the point—where will my words be edited, and with a metropolitan outlook based in what city, by an editor living in what city, who defines his readers according to his neighbors in what city?

That old bromide, in other words, hasn't lost its fizz. You can take the music critic out of New York, perhaps, but you can't take New York out of the music critic . . . nor out of anyone else who operates in any aspect of the performing arts.

In current circumstances I get to New York anywhere from seven to ten times during the musical season, each visit lasting from ten days to two weeks, each trip planned on the basis of cost-effectiveness—i.e., how many notable, reportable events will be happening during that time. Coming in that often does, alas, rob me of the excitement of travel; it becomes very easy to conceive of a single city bounded on one side by the Long Island Expressway and on the other by the San Diego Freeway. It has its advantages, though. Old friends at concerts actually come over to talk, instead of just waving from afar. Mostly they want to know what in God's name I can find to do night after night in forsaken California, but usually I have a pretty convincing answer. Most of all, these trips do recharge my batteries. Beyond question the energy level of New York audiences is higher than the Californian norm; the passion of New Yorkers to be conversant (even if misinformed) on everything generates an electricity that you feel immediately—not only at concerts, but even in the surrounding area (around the Lincoln Center fountain even on cold nights, in the classical section of Tower Records, or in the back room of the Empire Hotel, where at breakfast a fantastic waitress named Caroline presides over a *Kaffeeklatsch* worthy of one of Mme Récamier's salons).

These are all, I admit, very small—or, let's say, human-sized—excuses for my frequent returns to New York (beyond the obvious excuse that my job depends on it). Yet, they seem to me supremely important. I can, as I was saying, maintain all the contact I need with the bastions of the musical establishment without actually turning up on management's doorstep day after day. What continues to excite me about New York, however—and what cannot be sent over a phone line or by overnight mail delivery—is the intensity of the artistic consumership in that city, an exuberance over the act of concert-or opera-going that I haven't found duplicated anywhere else in this country (and abroad only in London and, perhaps, Milan). Why it should be centered in New York is something I have struggled to define in print, not always successfully, over many years. It could be the racial mix; it could be the fierce New York competitiveness, along with the fierce New York overcrowding, that produces bold actions; it could be the accidents of architecture or interior design that endow places like Lincoln Center or the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

92nd Street "Y" with a sense of beckoning, inviting, that no cultural center elsewhere has yet been able to duplicate. It could be any, or all, of the above.

I can conceive of a time when the hard facts of New York's current cultural importance will no longer hold, of a time when musical events can be booked from management offices in San Francisco or Houston as readily as from New York. It *has* to happen, in fact; New York is well on its way toward running out of space, both mental and physical, while at the same time it becomes more and more practicable (not to mention practical) to function vis-à-vis that great metropolitan monolith from a made-over den in West Los Angeles or, some day, a tree house in Maui. I see this trend not as symptomatic of any sort of New York decline; there are other symptoms of *that* around, which I'll leave to the sociologists. I see it, rather, as the realization in human terms of the decentralization in arts leadership that began in concrete and glass when Lincoln Center began to clone itself across the American map two decades ago. It's already happening. The Music Center in Los Angeles no longer operates as merely a booking house for touring events; now it creates and manages its wide list of home-grown offerings in music, dance, and theater. So does Kennedy Center; so, eventually, will most of the nation's major cultural centers. It has to happen.

But New York will still have those audiences, the ragamuffin aficionados from Bronx High School of Science or Erasmus Hall who, at sixteen, know all the Köchel numbers by heart and can finger the best recording of Bax's *Tintagel*; the palookas from Teamsters who'll punch you out on the subject of Bergonzi vs. Pavarotti; the bag ladies who can sing along with the Berg *Lyric Suite*. If I write about music for a living, I have to drop in on these people now and then. They're among my most precious readers, and I'd better not forget them. I'll only find them in New York.

Larry Rivers

Larry Rivers was born in New York in 1923. He graduated from New York University and studied painting with Hans Hofmann. His first solo exhibition was held in New York in 1949, and since that time he has exhibited in virtually all the major art museums in this country and abroad. He is the author of Drawings and Digressions, *published in 1979, and is currently represented by the Marlborough Gallery in New York, where he will be exhibiting in October. He is also a professional jazz saxophonist. He lives in New York and on Long Island.*

"Does New York lead now and will it continue to lead?" In other words, do artists—I guess, younger artists—look to New York to be a place that would have some effect upon their work, their careers? Well, yes. I guess New York *is* a leader for the poor and the blind and the provincial. But maybe that's not taking the question seriously. It depends on what age you are, what generation you belong to. It's hard to know whether my thoughts about the art world would have to do with getting older, too. Elaine de Kooning said to me, about twenty-five years ago, that if anybody was doing anything—meaning anything important in art—we, our group, would know it. Today you couldn't possibly talk that way—unless you were an art sociologist! It's all gotten so much bigger. It's just mushroomed. Fifty-seventh Street is still there, but when you think of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SoHo—it's one square mile of art biz. Everybody has to keep his eye on the bouncing ball. Career is here.

Not that other things aren't involved, but first it's careers, and artists carving out their constituencies. This is not an accusation from a pure man. Today notions of major and minor art concerns are a hand-me-down from another time that doesn't fit the 1980s' body of art. While some art concerns have a larger constituency, and others, like Kenny Scharf's at Palladium, a smaller but hipper one, no art today by its appearance on the scene automatically consigns work to the "dustbin of history." For all its mad scrambling, the New York art world of the Eighties seems more like a hit-and-miss democracy responding to Milton Friedman's marketplace fantasies.

When I first went to the Artists Club in the Fifties, I was a young painter, an upstart. The artists there all seemed very serious. That impressed me more than anything. They were very, very serious—in their rhetoric (aesthetic and political), their references (Barney Newman seemed to have all of ancient Greece at the end of his tongue), their clothes (a combo of corduroy and army-navy-store rejects used for working-class associations). The Club itself was a small loft in need of a paint job, maybe two windows, and located on Bohemia's main street. There was a table—the idea of the symposium (which, appropriately, means "drinking together" in Greek). Everything was intimate, if not packed. And I had the feeling that people there had thoughts and fantasies and even personal memories of the Surrealists, the Dadaists, Mondrian, Grosz, et al., and were trying to create a situation that would resemble the commitment of those refugees, certainly in the way questions were asked and answered, and in what was thought to be important. At the end of each meeting there was a kind of unwritten manifesto presented for the applause and catcalls of the artists. They invited people like James Johnson Sweeney to come down to speak to them, to get his point of view. He was, as you would say, a "leader," a taste-maker, an elder. They would have a question-and-answer period, with long speeches from the audience. And on certain evenings they invited younger artists to sit around and talk and answer certain questions. One evening, I sat down there with Al Leslie, Grace Hartigan, and Jane Freilicher; we discussed I don't remember what subject. But it made me feel that art had an intellectual content. These discussions gave me the sense that there was a whole array of aesthetic choices—an aesthetic spectrum—and what you were doing in your work had a place in it. It also gave me a sense of all sorts of historical contexts, of what the historical context allowed and what it didn't. I remember asking the sculptor Herbert Ferber a pretty dumb question, something about whether he thought Renoir (whom I'd probably just discovered) could be considered a modern painter. From the wooden table where he sat, he slowly removed his glasses, acting as if this would help his hearing. The answer he gave was predictable: my question was absurd.

"Another thing about the early Artists Club is that no one was commercially successful. That was meaningless. It was like belonging to a church. Not receiving any rewards for making art somehow made the concerns even stronger. Art was not a career. Not yet."

At the Club there were no doubts about the necessity of being *modern.* It was unarguable. It was so unarguable that it wasn't even mentioned. It stood behind everything that was talked about. But these people were like your parents: they seemed powerful and you got a lot from them. You couldn't really argue with them. If you weren't interested in the avant-garde, in being avant-garde your-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

self, no one was interested in you. Even though I went my own way, and seemed to be doing work contrary to their ideas of modernism, I still felt that what went on at the Artists Club stood for something important. After all, look at what effect their notions had on art, on how we see, and on what it did produce—I think a lot of great things. Artists moved out in all directions to make sure they weren't "repeating the past." Some old-timers talked as if they had actually *met* Trotsky. That atmosphere still has an effect on me, who as a kid thought the boy with a copy of Marx's *Das Kapital* under his arm was the real star of my neighborhood.

There was also a social aspect to the Club. It was a place to go Friday night to see and be seen. I play saxophone, and the Club used to have parties with dancing. No matter what they thought of my work as a painter, when they were going to have a party they would always ask if I could "get a group together for it." And I did. The variety and mixture of ages and approaches, sexual and aesthetic, that was jammed between the walls now seems incapable of explanation. Another thing about the early Artists Club is that no one was commercially successful. That was meaningless. It was like belonging to a church. Not receiving any rewards for making art somehow made the concerns even stronger. Art was not a career. Not yet.

It changed, of course. You would go down to the Club and someone would come over and say: "Did you hear, Jackson Pollock sold a work for nine thousand dollars!" "Nine thousand dollars! Really? Who bought it?" Discussions on the virtues and problems of figurative art as opposed to abstract art began mingling with the news of artists getting shows and selling their work and appearing in newspaper and magazine articles. How much longer did the Club go on after people started selling their work? I'm not sure. Not very long. You began to hear the word "career" more often in relation to what began taking place—the scene, so to speak. You were able to use the word with a greater degree of reality. I still remember not long afterwards Bill de Kooning saying to me: "Well, you know, it's a good living!" It sounded shocking.

Another thing about the Club and that period—since we're talking about *then* compared to *now*. Now there doesn't seem to be a spokesman for any point of view. Do you know of any? I don't. At the Club, Tom Hess was considered "their writer," because he touted those artists, the Abstract Expressionists. He made *Art News* in the Fifties their magazine. I don't think there's anything like that going on now. Tom met John Ashbery, Frank O'Hara, Jimmy Schuyler, and Fairfield Porter. He thought they were interesting and tried to get their lively minds to work on his magazine. He would go to the Club meetings. He had social and personal relations with the artists, and was invited to their downtown parties. He saw what was in the artists' studios and whatever else was going on. In the magazine he also awarded prizes—you know, best show of the year, second-best, best drawing show, and so on. He felt enthusiasm for what was happening, and tried to stir things up. Tom figured out that artists needed rewards. If they weren't selling anything, they at least knew someone was looking. He came into the art world at a time when museum shows and collections of new work hardly existed. He himself actually bought art and hung it on his walls. Okay, he was a rich man, but who else did it? I wasn't always crazy about what he thought was the best, to tell you the truth. In fact, when he started getting interested in people of my generation, myself included, I always felt as if it were a little bit to back up his taste in the works of the previous generation. As if our work were corroborating the position he took toward de Kooning, Newman, Kline, et al. But it didn't matter. He was still a force. It's too bad he died when he did. Aside from my missing him personally, it would have been interesting to see what he could have done at the Metropolitan Museum. I mean, nothing else has really challenged the power of the Museum of Modern Art, and it's possible that the Met had the resources to do it. Now I doubt if it will ever happen. Today the art world

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

doesn't seem to have a spokesman of Tom's kind.

New York's position of leadership in art? What went into it—what affected it? Immigration! I think the question has to be seen in the light of Jews and art. In making art, writing about art, collecting it, creating the surroundings, the froth as well as the real thing—in all of that, the Jews played a big part: from the broker who compiled a collection in lieu of commissions to the dentist who took an abstraction for an extraction, to the Aldriches, Guggenheims, Neubergers, and Hirshhorns, who donated modern works

"And when you leave New York, you take it with you anyway. For instance, for about six or seven years I went to Mexico for two or two and a half months of the year to paint. But I never painted anything relating to Mexico."

and later built modern structures to house them. Most of the people I knew were first-generation Americans. They had great respect for art in a way that other people didn't seem to have. I grew up thinking art was very special. In addition to social and sexual payoffs, the choice of going into art had to do with the aspirations of the European life. I don't mean that all immigrants felt that way or that their children all grew up that way, but look at what happened. Young, successful Jewish businessmen, or lawyers, the people making money, felt some compulsion to relate themselves to art. I don't know exactly why. Could the artists have survived without them? I'm not saying that the motives were always so beautiful. Think of Bob Scull, for example: definitely not always so beautiful. At the same time, it was quite arousing. Bob Scull wanted to mingle with the artists, to shower something on them; he wanted to collect. Okay, he wanted to make money too. Maybe he was imitating the idea of an older America when the moneyed class bought art or was related to the arts. It's possible. But the point is, others didn't do it. I mean, it seems to me there were a lot of Jews involved. And many of them were the writers and the critics, too, like Greenberg, Rosenberg, Kramer, Hess, and Barbara Rose. Was there something special about what they did because they were Jews? Yes, I think so. A certain nervous climbing energy was there, for one thing. A feeling of always being on the make—and not in a bad sense, either. Maybe it had to do with wanting to impress, or to be liked, or to be thought of a little better, because in the beginning—if you were a Jew—you weren't somehow so well thought of. I mean, there's always a fight, being a Jew, at least there was in my childhood. So you would try to excel. But I can't explain it all. All I know is that it was there, and it was important.

It was certainly important for me. In the late Fifties and early Sixties, I was partially supported by a couple who were younger than I was. They gave me a certain amount of money a year and they would take art in return for it. Sometimes they would even try to argue about the price, but it didn't matter. This young couple did this for about two or three years. But it's not just personal history. Without the interest and participation of the Jews, the whole contemporary art scene might not have been the mad and "wonderful" thing it is today.

This reminds me of another thing. Maybe it relates to the Club and the feeling it gave you about being an artist and part of something. Now it seems as if the idea of a "brotherhood of artists" is gone. It's an awful phrase, but blame Van Gogh. I no longer feel there's that camaraderie. But don't think I'm writing with tears in my eyes.

Many years ago, if a political issue arose you could be pretty certain what the artists' response would be. No to capital punishment. The Caryl Chessman execution produced lots of artworks and a parade showing

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

them. The Vietnam War. Signs, shouting, and a march. This is what we stood for. Dore Ashton, a few years ago, asked artists to reject showing in Spain. She was fighting the old villain, Franco. She is sweet. In 1976, the French released from jail a heavy Arab, Aba-ben-someone, who supposedly planned the doing in of the twelve Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympics. It was the moment when the Pompidou Centre, the Beaubourg, was opening, and a trip was arranged for all the American artists in the collection to go over to Paris for it. A group opposing the trip, wishing us not to go, was formed and headed by none other than the renowned Louise Nevelson and her dealer Arnold Glimcher. Going to the opening put me in the position of being unsympathetic to the Jews. Considering the unchanging and ongoing Arab-Israeli mishmash and how little that boycott would affect it, Oscar Wilde's remark that we only regret what we didn't do stands as one of the rationalizations for my deciding to go. Another inspiration to going was a picture of French artists refusing to come to a Hirshhorn Museum international exhibition in Washington because Richard Nixon continued to bomb North Vietnam. More recently, there was that public forum about the Serra sculpture in downtown Manhattan. The things that were said at that forum! They were excruciating and embarrassing! At times like that you know you can't predict what position artists will take. The old positions of the Right and the Left, conservative and avant-garde, censorship and freedom of expression, are no longer accurate descriptions of the issues.

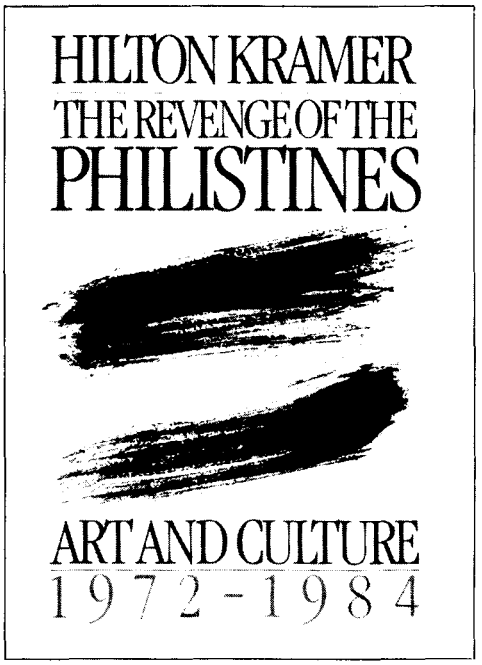
You ask: "In your field, is the new generation of leaders in New York or elsewhere?" Well, there's the Museum of Modern Art. It is still the model for the rest of the world, whether the museum is living up to its reputation or not in some of the things they show. MOMA is still the Pope, and unfortunately there is no way to escape its power.

But beyond that, there are certain standards in New York. The art spaces are spacious, the audience is jaded and varied. Making an impression here can be considered an accomplishment. While New York's Fifties' and Sixties' cultural position has been diluted, it is still considered the capital of art. I recently had shows in Stockholm and Tokyo. It was important to the people there that I was showing in New York. The dealers come to New York to get artists to show in Sweden. It gives them confidence. When I went to Tokyo there was a Judy Pfaff show there—from New York. What stands for contemporary art there is New York.

And when you leave New York, you take it with you anyway. For instance, for about six or seven years I went to Mexico for two or two and a half months of the year to paint. But I never painted anything relating to Mexico. There's this whole world out there, but in my own little studio I never painted Mexico. I was always preparing for a show or some commitment in New York.

In some ways it really doesn't matter where you are. You pick yourself out a corner—maybe a large one—somewhere that's conducive to your work and you paint. But there are places you bring your work to, finally, and I suppose for me that place will always be New York.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



"Hilton Kramer is a percipient,
sophisticated and highly intelligent observer...
The artist breathes again within his art."
—Richard Wollheim, *New York Times Book Review*

"[The book offers] magnificent examples of art criticism
in its highest vocation."
—Arthur C. Danto, *Grand Street*

"Kramer has the knowledge, the skill, and the passion
to attend to the 'need' we all feel 'for something in art
that is "beyond" art.' And he has the wit
to make art criticism a form of pleasure."
—*Christian Science Monitor*

"There remains in all his best writings
a touch of the young man, newly arrived from the provinces,
awed by the power and seriousness of art."
—Jane Addams Allen, *Washington Times Magazine*

"An unintimidated survey of the triumphs, tempests and tarradiddles
that have marked the American art scene
over the past 15 years."
—*Kirkus Reviews*

$25 at bookstores, or charge by phone by calling 1-800-257-5755
(in New Jersey, Alaska, or Hawaii dial direct: 1-609-461-6500).

THE FREE PRESS
A Division of Macmillan, Inc.
866 THIRD AVENUE, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

M. Knoedler & Co.

Walter Darby Bannard

Michael David

Richard Diebenkorn

Friedel Dzubas

Herbert Ferber

Adolph & Esther Gottlieb
Foundation, Inc.

Nancy Graves

Howard Hodgkin

Robert Motherwell

Jules Olitski

Estate of Ludwig Sander

Estate of David Smith

Frank Stella

John Walker

19 East 70 Street. New York 10021
Telephone (212) 794-0550

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Barbara Rose

Barbara Rose was born in Washington in 1938 and studied at Smith College, Barnard College, and the Sorbonne. She received a Ph.D. in art history from Columbia University. She has taught at Sarah Lawrence College, Hunter College, and Yale Unviersity, and has served as senior curator at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston. Among her many books are American Art Since 1900 *and monographs on Claes Oldenburg, Patrick Henry Bruce, Lee Krasner, Helen Frankenthaler, and Alexander Liberman. She is currently at work on a study of Jasper Johns to be called* Souvenir, *and is also organizing exhibitions for cultural exchange programs with Spain. She makes documentary films on American artists and writes for several New York publications. She divides her time between New York and Camerata di Todi, Italy.*

In the first place, I take issue with your thesis that New York continues "in all questions having to do with high culture . . . to occupy a place of unequalled leadership." Although it is surely true that style and fashion, in ideas as in art, are certified if not fabricated in Manhattan, I sincerely doubt claims regarding the pre-eminence of New York as a center of creation or criticism. The atmosphere of the city has been so radically altered by real-estate speculation and the influx of fugitive capital of unsavory origin, especially from Europe and Central and South America, that the survival of the arts, and certainly that of artists, is threatened by inflated rents, prohibitive production costs, and semi-educated audiences unresponsive to experimental or difficult work.

When I first came to New York in the late Fifties to attend graduate school, it was the mecca for intellectuals, artists, scholars, writers, and performers, not for rapacious international wheeler-dealers and unconscionable trust-funded dilettantes in search of self-expression, who wish to perform rather than to applaud. Nor was it the corporate headquarters of America. Perhaps it is unnecessarily nostalgic to remember when one travelled safely by subway and limousines were reserved for funerals or state occasions, when fewer people were interested in cultural affairs (and those who were, were more seriously interested). The enlargement of the ambience of culture and its role as status symbol has inevitably brought the level of culture down. Free-market economics does not insure that funds will flow to the best and the brightest: the self-made parvenu is historically a philistine in matters of taste.

Stimulating the appetite for cultural events without educating an audience to discriminate critically has not improved the situation. Somehow, looking at the lines of bewildered, already exhausted ticket holders searching for Alexander, and finding only photo blow-ups of Macedonia and a few artifacts from his father's tomb, one feels that the economic health of New York and its cultural institutions has been bought at the price of quality and creativity. The result is that Manhattan more and more resembles the trite, pretentious films of the middlebrow hero, Woody Allen.

The most obvious reason New York can no longer be a center of creative thought or work is that creative people and even much of their audience live marginal lives. It is not possible to live a marginal existence in New York City today. Not with artists' lofts renting at three thousand dollars a month in SoHo, which is now a quaint hideaway for wealthy lawyers, dentists, accountants, designers, and real-estate agents. This is particularly ironic since there is an unenforced law that only legitimate artists can live in the historic cast-iron district. Most of the American artists I know whose work I admire live in small towns in New England or the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

South. Of those I consider among the greatest living sculptors, Susanna Solano lives with her three children in an industrial slum outside Barcelona, Magdalena Abakanowicz works in Warsaw, and Mark di Suvero was last seen in a trailer near a chicken farm in northern California.

Even if one could afford to live in New York, who could stand the noise and fumes, not to mention the endless distractions? Today, New York is the place where Madison Avenue meets Wall Street and the values of advertising, marketing, speculation, and manipulation prevail, along with the morality of the "bottom line." Profitability is the criterion of value, just as wealth and success define social status and position in the "city that never sleeps" (for good reason: it is too noisy). When I left New York for Texas, I thought of Manhattan as Istanbul, a kind of endless bazaar of babble and baubles. Now it reminds me more of Marrakesh, with the snake charmers, rug peddlers, camel traders, etc. doing business publicly in restaurants and discotheques.

No, I do not love New York. It sold its soul to save its face. It is the place where the best performances can be seen and heard, for the highest prices, and where the market and the "action," i.e., the buying and selling, take place. New York is a city for the consumers, not the producers, of culture. I remember reading the biography of Thomas Hart Benton when I was a student and being puzzled by his rejection of New York as a "coffin for living and thinking." At this point, I agree with him.

In the field of art, New York is the commercial capital where the works being made in Madrid, Barcelona, Paris, Berlin, Rome, and Naples, not to mention London, Seville, and villages too small to name, are huckstered and auctioned. The leading new artists to my mind are Spanish, German, and, to a lesser extent, Italian. Excellent work is also being done in England. The most interesting new American art either is realist in style—possibly because realism cannot be easily reduced to decor—or is being created by the last ethnic groups to be assimilated, Hispanics and Orientals, whose minds have not yet been poisoned by the careerist nihilism taught in our art schools. Not many of them can afford New York. As for art criticism, it is, in the main, paid publicity. Only critics with trust funds can write when and where they wish; the rest of us are too busy making a living. Dealers, "collectors," and in some instances the artists themselves pay for flattering "reviews." Negative criticism is discouraged or cut. Nobody, espe-

"New York is a city for the consumers, not the producers, of culture. I remember reading the biography of Thomas Hart Benton when I was a student and being puzzled by his rejection of New York as a 'coffin for living and thinking.' At this point, I agree with him."

cially the art market, wants to hear bad news. That the art market is rigged is so well known it hardly bears repeating. Given current practices, Oscar Wilde was wrong in thinking that the auctioneer is impartial. Moreover, the power to create taste, once in the hands of artists, then of critics and curators, and more recently of dealers, is now in the not altogether disinterested hands of "collectors," who warehouse works bought like junk bonds, as a kind of amusing high-risk speculation that brings with it an entertaining life-style.

Personally, I am much more interested in what goes on outside New York. The disintegration of the concept of a "mainstream," aided by the anti-elitist policies of the National Endowment for the Arts, means that much that is live and creative, at least in the visual arts, is also fragmented, solipsistic, naïve, and provincial. Its saving grace is authenticity.

I spend as little time as possible in New York. It is the place where I sell what I do,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not where I do it. New York today must be the most fatiguing, frustrating, abrasive environment conceivable, possibly because its advertising campaign worked, and millions have come to bite the Big Apple. Many of them don't live there either; they take advantage of Manhattan without contributing to its maintenance. The city is nevertheless overpopulated: the poor have been replaced by a rich, young, bored, sensation-crazed generation madly in pursuit of the "good life" as they have learned about it in Hollywood movies and televison serials about the ruling class. Waving their MBAs and other professional credentials, few of these young people have been exposed to anything like a classic liberal-arts education, the prerequisite for understanding or making serious art.

Social and economic conditions are obviously responsible for the decline in taste and culture in New York as elsewhere in America. Our schools are pressed to drop humanities programs that are not "cost effective," and to promote quantity over quality. The current breed of robber barons does not feel the obligation to return anything to society, pressured neither by the Puritan ethic nor by the Ivy League tradition of *noblesse oblige*. Nor do these new rich feel the need of specialists like Bernard Berenson or Duveen to advise them. They already know what they like. Then there is the Reagan idea that culture is a business, which enables corporations to determine what passes for culture. Proposed changes in tax legislation appear likely to augment the influence of corporate giving, which always comes with strings attached, since it is but another form of advertising.

Yes, there are many thriving regional cultures in America where the level of experiment, risk, and creativity is higher than in New York, even if the work is not as polished. Media make reputations, however, and the cultural power of *The New York Times* is difficult to combat, no matter how arbitrary or undeserved it is in the face of a lack of competition from another daily paper. There is no such thing as a cultural capital with only one newspaper covering the arts daily.

Having lived a large part of the past few years in Madrid and Paris, where enlightened socialist governments have stimulated and supported high culture, and educational television dares to instruct rather than merely to entertain, I find it difficult to imagine America retaining hegemony in any but the lowest forms of the mass media. When profit is the only motive, the lowest common denominator wins. Sex and violence appeal to the uncivilized, and as these instincts are constantly aroused in an increasingly barbaric moral void, their purveyors are sure to prosper. It is perhaps not well known, for example, that one of the most important private collectors of old-master paintings in the United States is Bob Guccione, the editor of the pornographic magazine *Penthouse*. I find something exquisitely symmetrical in that perfect paradigm of the plight of the arts in America today.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

William Schuman

William Schuman was born in New York City in 1910. He received undergraduate and graduate degrees from Teacher's College, Columbia University, took classes at the Juilliard School, and studied composition with Roy Harris. From 1935 to 1945 he taught at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, New York. In 1945, after a short time as director of publications for G. Schirmer, Inc., he resigned to become president of the Juilliard School, a position he held until 1962. From 1962 until 1969 he was president of Lincoln Center. Since 1969 he has assumed leadership roles in several prestigious arts organizations while continuing to produce numerous commissioned works. Mr. Schuman has received many awards, including the first Pulitzer Prize for music (in 1943). His principal compositions include ten symphonies, four string quartets, the ballets Undertow *and* Night Journey, *a piano and a violin concerto, and many distinguished works for orchestra, among them the* New England Triptych *and* American Festival Overture. *Mr. Schuman is a member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. He divides his time between New York City and Greenwich, Connecticut.*[1]

How do you judge a city? Perhaps the best place to start is with the word "choice." A city depends on the choices it offers its inhabitants. Of course, it also depends on the importance that each person gives to the choices that are available, and on the resources and health to take advantage of them. If you live in New York and you have no interest in anything you couldn't get in Squeedunk, well, there wouldn't be any point in living here. But for anyone seriously interested in the arts, New York is the place to be. Whether the city can maintain its preeminence has a great deal to do with whether it can sustain its astonishing variety of choices.

I first became aware of New York as a vast arena of choices when I was growing up here and first learning about music. The city was a wonderful learning laboratory for a young musician—especially for me. I had very little formal training in music when I was young, although I could sing pretty well and play the banjo and violin. In high school, I formed a dance band, and I even started writing popular songs—lots of them. But when I heard my songs published, I realized that the chords were all wrong, and when I wanted to arrange the songs for a dance orchestra, I was so lacking in knowledge that I didn't know there was such a thing as a score.

One day I took one of my songs and just spread music paper on the floor. I wrote each instrument in by hand and took what I had done—with all its misspellings and bad transpositions—to a band that was playing in the basement of Child's Restaurant on Columbus Circle. I gave the musicians some cigarettes and asked them if they would play my music for me and criticize it. They were very helpful. I remember one fellow saying: "Well, you can't have a trombone playing a B-natural there or you'll break his arm." Another time I went to Rudy Vallee with one of my songs. He looked at it and said: "My band leader tells me there's no guitar part. I can't play your song unless there's a guitar part." So I called the guitar player aside and asked him to teach me how to do it. He did, and Vallee played the song that night. Occasionally, I also took my music down to the Biltmore Hotel, where Bert Lown was playing. He seemed to like me,

1 The remarks in this essay are transcribed from an interview with William Schuman conducted by *The New Criterion* on May 13 of this year. The composer was asked specifically to recall his formative years in New York.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and he didn't mind helping a youngster along.

So for me, New York had a lot to offer in the way of music education. But of course there was plenty of music around simply to hear and enjoy. I was especially fascinated by the bands. I remember going to a dinner, when I was a kid of sixteen or seventeen, and hearing George Olson's band. I just sat in the ballroom balcony directly over the band and looked down and watched them for hours. It was wonderful. And of course the Goldman Band played in New York each year. Without a doubt, the popular music I heard when I was growing up in New York formed the basis for the music I would later write as a so-called serious composer.

One day—when I was nineteen—my sister and mother talked me into going to a concert by the New York Philharmonic. Toscanini was conducting. They played the Funeral Music from *Götterdämmerung,* the *Summer Evening* of Kodály, and the Third Symphony of Robert Schumann. I was knocked cold! It literally changed my life. I was then enrolled at New York University, in business, and I had a part-time job at an advertising agency writing copy for a candy account. I realized that my whole life had to change: I had to be in serious music. So the very next day I dropped out of NYU. I told myself I didn't want any more of this, and I started walking uptown. When I reached the corner of Seventy-seventh Street and West End, I saw a sign posted on one of the buildings. It read: "Malkin Conservatory of Music." I went in and said: "I want to be a composer. What do I have to do?" The receptionist told me that I would have to study harmony, so I signed up for private lessons with a man named Max Persin. He was a sort of saint. He would come to our apartment at nine in the morning and not leave until six in the evening. (This was all for three dollars, by the way—the cost of one lesson.) Of course I learned harmony from him, but, more important, I learned to feel a certain idealism about music. He told me not to give up my interest in popular music. At the same time, he introduced me to the "advanced" music of the day, which was represented by Ernest Bloch's *Concerto Grosso* (in fact, it was not all *that* advanced).

So you see, between the George Olson's band and the New York Philharmonic, between Rudy Vallee and Max Persin, New York was "music city" in the Thirties, offering an incredible range of choices. But the choices were not only in music. Living up near Columbia, I saw lots of modern dance when I was growing up—with dancers like Harald Kreutzberg, Yvonne Georgi, Mary Wigman, and Martha Graham, even Ruth St. Denis. (All of this experience was to stand me in good stead when I came to write ballets of my own some years later.) And I saw many, many plays. The theater scene in New York was incredibly rich in those days. This was the time, after all, of the Group Theater, and there were many serious plays on Broadway. What's more—and especially important for a young person of modest means—it was all affordable. My friends and I would take a five-cent subway ride to Times Square, have a marvelous lunch at Schrafft's for thirty-five cents, and buy a ticket for fifty cents—choosing from among fifty or sixty plays! With the whole day costing less than a dollar, we could do it every week—and we did.

That was New York "then." But what about now? Well, part of the problem in talking about the current scene is trying to define a negative with so many compensating positives. On balance, New York is still pre-eminent in numerous areas of human endeavor. In music, I have no question that New York remains the leader. There are other parts of the country, of course, that have very strong cultures in music, but for anybody whose life is centered on the arts, New York is obviously the capital.

I read somewhere recently that Washington, D.C., was going to "overtake" New York as a cultural center. This seems to me a ridiculous argument: it makes the arts sound like a sports match. There are superb artistic riches in Washington. The Library of Congress, for instance, has a fine chamber-music program, and its audience really wants to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hear chamber music, whether it's new music or the classics of the literature. By contrast, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—which, incidentally, I initiated in the mid-Sixties—has an absolutely status-quo audience. They don't even applaud vigorously when you play "The Trout." But in New York you have not only that group—which appeals, after all, to a particular audience—but you have myriad chamber-music groups all over the place playing every kind of music

"I read somewhere recently that Washington, D.C., was going to 'overtake' New York as a cultural center. This seems to me a ridiculous argument: it makes the arts sound like a sports match."

imaginable. It is not to denigrate Washington to point out, by way of comparison, that it has only that one principal center for chamber music. Other cities, too, have their single examples. But there is no city in the world that offers—every night, in every field—the kind of scope and variety you find in New York. And even if you don't take advantage of all the choices, living in an atmosphere where they're all available does something to you.

In many ways, I consider myself a New York composer. I was formed here. I feel part of the landscape. I couldn't have written a piece like my *American Festival Overture* if I had lived any other place. In that piece, the sense of place has to do with the cry I heard on the streets of New York, the "Wee-Awk—Eee" phrase with which the overture opens. But there's obviously more to it than that. I feel that New York speech and New York tempo are very much in my blood. People tend to think of the character of New York superficially; they think that New York means going fast. But New York has oceanic calm as well as all the other qualities of urban life.

There can be such a thing as localism in music without its being at the same time provincial. Just as there is Spanish music, there's American music; and just as there is American music, there's New York music. Such labels have nothing to do with quality, of course, because certainly there are very fine composers who have no discernible identity as, say, American composers. Hugo Weisgall would be one; he has an international style. But there *are* such things as American qualities—that is, qualities we tend to identify with as indigenous. Indeed, the qualities of shared experience are what create localism in any art form. Unfortunately, I would be hard-pressed to find any interesting localism in music in New York right now. As for the music of the so-called "downtown" scene, I don't think it's related to New York in any discernible way. Certainly the mindless repetitions of much of this music seem more related to Czerny.

As I travel around the country, I encounter localism in different varieties. Sometimes the performance medium alone can define a regional musical culture. For example, the bands in the Midwest—in Michigan, say—are extraordinary, absolutely marvelous, and the audiences are at home before band music in a way they are not anywhere else. But localism can often be provincial. When I was in Dallas a couple of years ago, I found what I find on so many college campuses. The local composers teach at the university, and at the end of the season they put on a contemporary music festival. But it's not about the big, naughty world outside. It's all about themselves. Or they put on a production of *Macbeth*. The local composer writes the incidental music, someone on the English faculty directs it, somebody else on the faculty does the choreography. It's very inbred. In New York, if you have provincialism—as you do at various universities in the city—it doesn't matter, because it's all gobbled up in the great big scene. But in those small communities it tends to *be* the scene. And that's an enormous difference

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

between New York and the rest of the country. In a city outside New York you can meet all your colleagues in one evening, or in two or three. In New York you don't meet them in sixty years. You can't.

One odd regional phenomenon right now has to do with the many symphony orchestras around the country. Of course, a whole marketing technique has taken over our orchestras in recent years; but more important, there has been a change in our orchestras' so-called resident conductors. They are almost all from somewhere else—especially Europe, and not just from the big cities of Europe, but the small towns, too. A kind of inverse chauvinism seems to be at work, in which American conductors are somehow suspect. This situation is especially bad for American composers and American music. A generation or two ago things were very different: it was the foreign conductors who championed American music. I have recently been looking through some correspondence. I have a number of letters from Stokowski saying, "What of yours can I perform next year?" There are letters from Rodzinski, Reiner, Ormandy, and others to the same effect, and, of course, extraordinary interest and support from Koussevitzky. That just doesn't happen anymore.

Part of the problem is the boards of directors who are in charge of appointing music directors. They simply have no criteria. In a sense, they never really did: it was always partly a matter of luck. But it's much worse now, because with rare exceptions nobody really seems to care. Things may change, of course. I hope they do. Perhaps in this matter, as in others, New York will lead the way. After all, in the New York Philharmonic (to choose a single example of the city's major institutions) we have one of the world's greatest institutions of art.

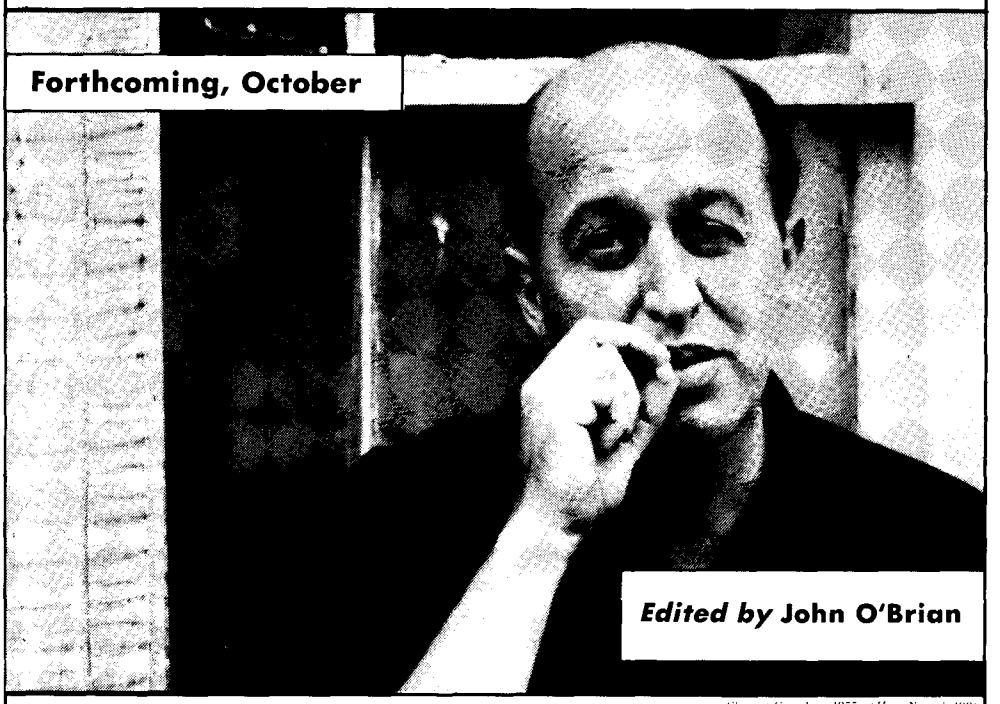
If there is anything that can defeat New York, whatever the variety of choices it continues to offer, it will be the quality of its life. The housing problem, for instance, looms large in my mind. It may eventually get to a point where the young will say: "Well, I can't do it. I simply can't go there." And yet, somehow, people still *do* come. Indeed, at least one aspect of New York's current vitality is the continuation of the process of immigration—the melting pot. Just look at what's happened in the last ten years with the influx of Russian Jewish immigrants. And they've brought their violins with them! There may well be—thanks to them—a renaissance of the tradition of Jewish violin playing, which has, lamentably, gone by the boards in recent years. And of course, they have brought with them as well the riches of their environment, of their country—as immigrants always have. It may not have much effect on the kind of music being written in America, but it may have an effect on an attitude toward music.

So, except for the problems of the environment, I'm an optimist about New York. That is, I feel about the city as the Austrians are proverbially supposed to feel about Austria: that it's hopeless, but not serious. New York will survive, and the arts will flourish as an integral part of the city's dynamic.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CLEMENT GREENBERG

THE COLLECTED ESSAYS AND CRITICISM



Clement Greenberg 1955. © Hans Namuth 1986

Volume 1

Perceptions and Judgments, 1939–1944

Volume 2

Arrogant Purpose, 1945–1949

These two volumes reprint more than two hundred items, presented in their original form and without revision. They unite the texts necessary for a proper assessment of Greenberg's development as a critic, including his advocacy of Jackson Pollock and other Abstract Expressionists, to the end of 1949. In addition, they demonstrate the broad range of his critical interests. Articles will be found on subjects as various as photography, the cartoon, Northern Renaissance painting, and American folk art. Two additional volumes will cover the period from 1950 to 1969.

Volume 1
Cloth $27.50 296 pages
2 line drawings

Volume 2
Cloth $27.50 368 pages
2 line drawings

The University of CHICAGO Press

5801 South Ellis Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gerard Schwarz

Gerard Schwarz was born in Weehawken, New Jersey, in 1947. He was educated in New York at the High School of Performing Arts and at the Juilliard School. In 1973 he was selected by Pierre Boulez to be co-principal trumpet of the New York Philharmonic, a position he held until 1978. Since leaving the Philharmonic, he has devoted his energies entirely to conducting. He has been music director of the Waterloo Music Festival (where he is now principal conductor) and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. At the present time he is music director of the Seattle Symphony, the Mostly Mozart Festival at New York's Lincoln Center, and the Y Chamber Symphony of New York. He has appeared as guest conductor with the National Symphony, the Buffalo and Rochester Philharmonic orchestras, the symphonies of Detroit, Houston, San Francisco, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Louisville, St. Louis, Ottawa, and Vancouver, as well as the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. Abroad, he has conducted orchestras in London, Florence, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Hong Kong, Madrid, Monte Carlo, Helsinki, and Paris. He now lives in Seattle and New York.

The position of New York as a cultural leader is a very complex one. In the world of music, New York has been, for many years, the cultural leader in the United States. It is also of course the single most important city in the Western World. But as a true leader, its influence is primarily in the United States.

For me, there seem to be two reasons for the predominance of New York in the musical world. First, there is the existence of an extremely large musical community within the city. Even with all the difficulties, economic and otherwise, of living in this city, a large percentage of the most important artists in the United States live in New York. These artists form a musical community, socially and as part of a sophisticated audience. I could easily name ten significant musicians who live within a three-block radius of my apartment on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. This is not to say that performers have places where they congregate and exchange ideas; but there is an ease with which they can see each other. These musicians, primarily soloists and chamber-music performers, represent New York as they travel all over the world. The only other city that is similar to New York in this respect is London.

The second major reason for New York's predominance has to do with the business side of the art. It is a well-known fact that, with one or two exceptions, all of the major managements that deal with the "selling" of artists and the building of careers are in New York. As a result, the presenters of concerts from all over the country not only speak to New York managements on a regular basis but also make regular trips to New York. The same can be said for managers of orchestras and opera companies. The major public-relations representatives are also in New York, as are the largest record companies (e.g., RCA and CBS) and music publishers.

Artists must appear in New York to secure management, encourage their existing management, or look for a better management. Composers must have their New York premieres. Most of our magazines with significant arts coverage are in New York and the country's most important daily newspaper, *The New York Times,* is of course in New York.

Yet this does not constitute real artistic leadership. I have talked about the city in terms of business, personal contacts among artists, and press recognition. Artistic leadership is a different issue. It is an issue that deals with the creation of new works, and it deals with significant performances, whether by indi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

viduals, orchestras, or opera companies. It deals with the context in which the music is presented, the hall in which it is played, and the audience for which it is performed. Artistic leadership is also influenced by a knowledgeable, serious, and influential press.

To expand on this question of artistic leadership, let me begin with the creation of new works. Throughout the history of American music in the twentieth century, the lives of composers have centered in and around New York City. A partial list is easy to compile—Gershwin, Copland, Schuman, Bernstein, Diamond, Rorem, Babbitt, Fine, Carter, Thomson, Barber, Perle. And most of the *émigrés* who came to this country lived in New York or Los Angeles: Schoenberg, Varèse, Stravinsky, Korngold; and a few were associated with schools outside New York: Hanson and Hindemith. An American music was created by Copland, and with his many musical evenings in New York he influenced a new generation of American composers.

Today American music is firmly established, and we do not have a single pivotal figure such as Copland leading the pack. As a result, composers are no longer primarily living in New York. Their New York performances continue to be very important because of the publishers, managers, press agents, and press; yet their residence in the city is much less crucial.

The proliferation of live concerts, orchestral broadcasts, concert-performance cassettes, and recordings enable composers to hear new works without actually being in the central place of performance—New York. One can probably say that a majority of composers live in New York, but it is not the necessity that it once was. If we simply look at the Pulitzer Prize winners from the last five years we can measure the geographic diversity: George Perle (New York), Stephen Albert (Boston and Seattle), Joseph Schwantner (Rochester), Bernard Rands (San Diego and now Boston), and Ellen Zwillich (New York).

In terms of performing these new works, New York's leadership is somewhat uneven. In recent years, New York's major institutions have not produced the major new works in their field. If it were not for the visiting orchestras from outside New York, the major works for orchestra would not have a forum here. In opera, significant contemporary works are rarely programmed in New York by our major institutions.

In chamber music and chamber-orchestra music, the New York ensembles do much better. During this season alone, the 92nd Street Y Chamber Symphony has premiered three significant works (in my own opinion and also in the opinion of the press): Hugh Aitken's Violin Concerto, Hugo Weisgall's "Tekiatot," and Stephen Albert's "Flower of the Mountain."

The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center is always looking for new works and does a generally excellent job of choosing composers to commission. New York's new-music ensembles do some excellent programming, and they perform with care and devotion. Most of our string quartets, inspired by the leadership of the Juilliard Quartet, show a commitment to new music. The Juilliard Quartet's leadership is due not only to its performances of contemporary works, but also to its efforts on behalf of education, something of a rarity these days.

To summarize: in New York we generally import performances of major orchestral works; we must go elsewhere to hear significant contemporary opera; but we do very well with chamber music, small ensembles, and chamber orchestras.

We are very lucky in New York to have some excellent concert halls. I cannot overstate the importance of good acoustical environments to promote the enjoyment of music. The list is obvious: Carnegie Hall, Fisher Hall, Tully Hall, Kaufmann Concert Hall, Metropolitan Opera House, Town Hall, and Merkin Hall. In some ways, Carnegie Hall is the most important because of its illustrious history and worldwide fame. All major artists want to appear in Carnegie Hall. Ensembles from outside New York put a tremendous weight on their New York appearances. Repertoire and artists are care-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fully chosen and ensembles are extensively primed for these appearances. A friend of mine who played in the Cleveland Orchestra under George Szell felt that Szell spent months at home and on tour getting the repertoire ready for Carnegie Hall. One can also say that the fame of that great orchestra came into its own only after Harold Schonberg of *The New York Times* proclaimed them to be great.

The fame of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra greatly changed after a successful trip to Carnegie Hall, also reviewed by Mr. Schonberg. Orchestras outside New York look to New York and to Carnegie Hall for the final step of artistic approval. Recently, in a review of the Seattle Symphony, which I conducted, Melinda Bargreen wrote in *The Seattle Times*:

> The Symphony has been in an incandescent form lately, with playing of a calibre that makes one itch to hear it in that crucible of American orchestras, Carnegie Hall.

There is no question that ensembles from outside New York still put a tremendous importance on their New York concerts.

The problem of the audience is a much less clear issue. A city that thinks of itself as a cultural leader must have a sophisticated, interested, and committed audience. Their involvement need not be in new music; an involvement with Beethoven or Wagner is extremely important. What they should receive are first-class performances of the great masterpieces of the past together with intelligently organized programs that will be of interest to a sophisticated audience. The programs, through the performance and the repertoire, should stimulate the members of the audience to be actively involved as listeners.

Without going into the problem of educating a younger audience, I feel that the major New York organizations have failed in recent years to build an involved, committed audience. New York has lost some of its respect as the cultural leader because of this failing. If organizations look to New York for leadership and guidance, New York must offer leaders in performance and programming. Generally, our major organizations do not influence our own musical community, and therefore cannot maintain their leadership position. The fact that the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, and New York Philharmonic are not the leaders that they once were in their own city means that sophisticated audiences will look elsewhere for stimulation, and the audience for all music in New York will suffer. I believe an artistic environment is established from the top. If our major organizations are not leading artistically, the general environment for all music in New York will be greatly hurt.

The situation with music journalists is quite different. In recent years, some extremely intelligent, knowledgeable, and serious writers on musical subjects have had a great influence on the general tone of criticism. The influence of the New York press is not as great as it once was, but if the level of journalism continues to improve, this situation will change.

Before I make my conclusions, I would like to direct my ideas to my specific area of conducting. I believe that most conductors of the new generation are not, at this time, in New York. In the field of conducting we still look to Europe as our cultural superior, the place where we will find the proper German conductor to interpret German music, or the proper French conductor to conduct Debussy. My career is certainly one that has been developed in and around New York, but I can think of a few other Amerian conductors whose lives have been so much connected with this city.

We can look back to the Bernstein era of the New York Philharmonic, when the Mitropoulos Conducting Competition winners became assistant conductors of the New York Philharmonic. Many went on to major careers. It should be said that almost all were European or Asian. Conductors who have made their careers in the United States certainly need continuous New York exposure. Orchestras from outside New York put a much greater importance on this

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

exposure than those of us who live here. Yet New York is still very much the center of musical life in this country. When conductors talk about conducting the Philharmonic, we all know they are not talking about the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

I believe New York's position of leadership is real. Certainly the concentration of media attention does not hurt. And the influx of performers from all over the world, as well as the many important ensembles here, make New York's position absolutely real.

Yet the cultural vitality of New York has changed a great deal over the last two decades. I think it is very difficult for New York to be a cultural leader when some of its resident ensembles are so severely criticized. The major ensembles affect the entire cultural life of this city. If the performance of music is perceived as mediocre, unexciting, not of the highest level, then the repercussions will be negative for all of New York's performing ensembles. Conversely, if the health of the major institutions, artistically, is of the highest level, then there will be a positive impact on other performing ensembles. Most importantly, there will be a larger, more diverse audience.

The audience, obviously, is the key. New York is a cultural center because it has a great audience that cares about high art. Without a level of performance to challenge this audience, New York has the real potential of becoming, at least in the performing areas, less significant.

The business and media aspects of the world of music certainly are centered in New York and this will help keep New York among the most important cultural centers in the world. But there needs to be a tremendous revitalization of the audience for our major institutions. The social and economic fluctuations do not affect the artistic vitality of New York. The vitality has to do only with the seriousness of the performance and the level of performance. At present, New York's slight decline as a cultural leader on the highest level has not led to any decline in New York's importance around the country. In time, certainly, if mediocrity becomes the rule in New York it could very much become the rule all over the country.

One's own standards come from oneself; to attain the highest possible artistic goals is the only thing we have to fight for. If our most important leaders do not fight for these idealistic, artistic goals, it becomes harder and harder for others to fight for them.

Musically, America has not become regionalized; yet, major cultural centers have been established all over the country. These centers are not small-scale replicas of what New York has been doing. Certainly there was a time when New York was so much the leader that what it did everyone else copied. This is no longer the case. Communities are now responding much more independently than they did thirty-five years ago.

The central leadership position of New York in the world of music is extremely important. If a leader can exist, and if that leader can meet the challenge of maintaining high artistic ideals, then the leadership position is of extreme importance. I think we all need someone, or some place, or something to emulate. If what was to be emulated could come from a city like New York the whole country would benefit.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ARMSTRONG

GALLERY/HARRIET LEBISH, DIRECTOR
50 WEST 57th NY 10019 (212) 582-8581

1986-1987 EXHIBITION SCHEDULE

September 6th	Harold Bruder
October 4th	Anne Madden
November 1st	Wallace Herndon Smith
December 6th	Benny Andrews
January 10th	Cleve Gray (to coincide with a Brooklyn Museum Retrospective and The Jewish Museum's travelling Exhibitions)
February 14th	S.W. Hayter
March 7th	Edward Giobbe
April 4th	William Scharf
May 2nd	Joe Stefanelli
June 6th	Betty Parsons

West Gallery will feature
drawings by gallery artists and vintage photography.
Schedule to be announced.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

KRAUSHAAR GALLERIES

FOUNDED 1885

SUMMER EXHIBITIONS

Works by 20th Century Americans

Including:

BEAL • BOUCHE • DEMUTH • DUBOIS

DICKINSON • GLACKENS • HARTLEY

KIENBUSCH • MARIN • MAURER

J. MYERS • SLOAN • M. ZORACH

Gallery Contemporary Artists

724 FIFTH AVENUE • NEW YORK 10019 • (212) 307-5730

Summer Hours: July-August, 10 to 5, Mon. thru Fri.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hugo Weisgall

Hugo Weisgall was born in Czechoslovakia in 1912, and came to the United States in 1920. He lived for many years in Baltimore, and since the 1960s has lived on Long Island. He has a Ph.D. in German literature from Johns Hopkins, and is a graduate of the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. During World War II, he was assistant United States military attaché to governments-in-exile in London, and later was cultural attaché in Prague. He has taught at the Juilliard School and Queens College, and for many years has been on the faculty of the Jewish Theological Seminary. His operas include The Tenor *(1949-50),* The Stronger *(1952),* Six Characters in Search of an Author *(1956),* Athaliah *(1963),* Nine Rivers from Jordan *(1968),* Jenny or the Hundred Nights *(1976), and* Gardens of Adonis *(1981). He has been composer-in-residence at the American Academy in Rome, and is a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters.*

I have been composing operas for the better part of forty years. For me to pretend to write objectively about New York's operatic life, let alone to view it with Olympian detachment, is somewhat fatuous. I am too viscerally involved. When I came here some twenty-five years ago, opera in America was almost synonymous with New York; there was no other place to go. That, certainly, is not true today. Were I a young, aspiring opera composer bent on making a career, I would think very hard before coming to New York and would probably end up trying to establish myself somewhere else: in the Midwest or on the West Coast or, perchance, in the Sunbelt. Even were I not so unfortunate as to be a composer but a singer, an opera coach, or a conductor, it would be safer to start outside New York. Given the pervading provincialism of American high culture, the New York stamp of approval—failing a European one—is still something much sought after.

Without falling into the all-too-familiar failing of old age—becoming a *laudator temporis acti*—it seems that things operatic in New York were better twenty-five years ago. Leaving aside momentarily the specific problems of composing opera, opera in New York (which to most people meant and still means what is done at the Met) was on a much higher level. There were more resident stars singing regularly, fewer cancellations, many greater conductors, and even Milton Cross's honeyed comments sounded better than what we hear today. For those who couldn't afford the Met and went to the old City Center on Fifty-fifth Street (a sizable and generally well-educated audience consisting in large parts of Central European refugees), there were some pretty good shows: standard Puccini, fairly frequent first-rate Mozart, even Wagner's *Meistersinger* or Strauss's *Capriccio,* not to mention Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle,* Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero,* Prokofiev's *Love For Three Oranges* (once actually his *The Flaming Angel*) and Berg's *Wozzeck.* At the Met, too, we heard twentieth-century works on occasion: Barber's *Vanessa,* Gruenberg's *Emperor Jones,* Rogers's *The Warrior,* Stravinsky's *Rake's Progress* and Menotti's *Amelia* and *Island God.* At the City Center, under the spirited and adventuresome leadership of Morton Baum, there were two full seasons funded by the Ford Foundation devoted exclusively to American opera. Though many of these works were not masterpieces, a few serviceable ones have survived and are sometimes heard today.

There was other opera, too. For a while, Broadway flirted with this form. The most prominent name of course was Gian Carlo Menotti, whose Broadway career brought forth a good portion of his best work: *The Telephone, The Medium, The Consul, The*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Saint of Bleecker Street, and even *Maria Golovin.* When the enormously successful *Amahl and the Night Visitors* is added, we have a career in opera the likes of which has not been duplicated in recent decades. Benjamin Britten's *Rape of Lucretia,* a much more high-brow article than anything by Menotti, also had a successful Broadway run. And then there were such novel ventures as Lemonade Opera, which ran fifty-three performances of Prokofiev's *Betrothal in a Convent.* Along the same lines, there were revival runs of Marc Blitzstein's *The Cradle Will Rock,* as well as his version of Weill's *Threepenny Opera.* Though New York's vest-pocket opera companies today occasionally do mildly interesting work, none of them has been able to do extended runs, as the above-mentioned productions were.

The school workshops, too, produced some excellent work. At Juilliard, there was Janáček's *Katja Kabanova,* Strauss's *Capriccio,* and Sessions's *Trial of Lucullus.* At Hunter, I recall Dello Joio's *The Ruby* and at Columbia University we heard the first performances of Thomson's *Mother Of Us All,* as well as productions of Argento's *The Boor* and the famous event, Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du Soldat* with Dimitri Mitropoulos.

Though concert opera was not highly in vogue, Thomas Scherman and the Little Orchestra Society occasionally commissioned pieces including my own opera *Athaliah* with Shirley Verrett, then a newcomer, in the title role.

While there is still much opera in New York and the Metropolitan is undoubtedly the most important company in the country simply because of its long season, the New York City Opera no longer has two seasons but only one, with musicals thrown into the repertory in an attempt to keep things going or perhaps to attract a new and different audience since the old Central Europeans are practically all gone. The repertory in both houses is not as interesting or adventuresome as it used to be and the outlook for American pieces is fairly dim. True, American performing artists have a better time of it here. Both houses are almost dominated by them, though the press constantly complains of the Met's inability to attract top international conductors and singers on any regular basis. Opera productions in recent years at the Manhattan School of Music have attracted much favorable attention, obviously owing to the fact that John Crosby of the Santa Fe Opera has been in charge of the repertory. Juilliard opera also has maintained a good level of interest.

As noted above, the Off-Broadway-type companies do some interesting work, though the level of performance at some of the pieces I have had the misfortune to attend has been pretty bad and does nothing either for the works performed or for the small audiences herded in to see them. The comments of the people I trust and the generally short and patronizing reviews I've seen lead me to believe that I'm not missing very much.

It is difficult to assess New York's position in American operatic life, because it is impossible to generalize about opera in America. Compared with many European houses, we have only the Metropolitan—in terms of size of budget and length of season. The Met runs well over two hundred performances in a full season; the other "biggies," such as Houston, New York City Opera, Chicago, and San Francisco, run from approximately thirty-five to about eighty performances. New York City Opera has about one hundred and twenty-five performances. Operetta, musicals, and Gilbert and Sullivan account for thirty-five of these. Furthermore, it must be noted that each company has its own idea of how it should function and what its responsibilities and goals are. They cherish and strongly defend their individual approaches.

American performers (singers, conductors, directors, set designers) are emphasized to a degree by most American opera companies. New York City Opera makes a big point of this; other companies, for a variety of reasons, still try to get as many "international" stars and foreign names as possible. If a company does three or four

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

productions a year and has lots of money to spend, it can obviously hire big names. These big names do not necessarily guarantee artistic worth. Smaller companies with less money frequently do better performances without big names and emphasize ensemble productions. The variables all over the United States are so great that one cannot generalize.

In terms of repertory, neither contemporary nor American works are frequently or widely seen. Contemporary works generally, other than American, tend to be those recognized as "classics"—Stravinsky or Benjamin Britten. The American works somewhat frequently produced are all very conservative and musically unadventuresome, with the notable exception of certain Argento pieces (all premiered in Minnesota). As noted above, neither the Met nor New York City Opera has a good record in terms of repertory in recent years. The adventuresome companies are all outside of New York: Santa Fe heading the list, and St. Louis. San Francisco has a much better record than New York in terms of contemporary works, though it has not produced a major American work for some time. Contemporary pieces also turn up occasionally in Chicago, Boston, and Houston, but no company with the exception of Santa Fe does new works consistently.

"New York is certainly no longer the magnet . . . . A composer now has to go where he can and try to make it there."

The University of Indiana has a good record for producing its own people—in recent years the works of John Eaton. Other American composers are largely ignored.

New York is certainly no longer the magnet. By and large, performers can come here and with luck make their mark. In some parts of the country, this is still a seal of approval. It seems impossible to establish oneself in New York as a composer, though the career of Philip Glass might seem to contradict this. A composer now has to go where he can and try to make it there. Menotti, still the biggest name, has not only Spoleto, Italy, but Charleston, South Carolina, and *The Medium* and *The Telephone* are recognized staples. Argento "made it" in Minneapolis and is occasionally produced elsewhere; John Eaton works in Bloomington, Indiana, and Stephen Paulus seems to be the darling of St. Louis. All other composers try their damnedest wherever they can. Sadly, the more challenging the work, the less its chances are for a production anywhere, let alone New York. Does this mean a loss of leadership for New York? What else could it mean?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MARCA-RELLI

ULTIMATE IMAGERY

12 JULY — 8 SEPTEMBER

ILLUSTRATED CATALOG AVAILABLE

RHLOVE Modern

108 E. OHIO, CHICAGO, IL 60611 **312/664-9620**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Leon Wieseltier

Leon Wieseltier was born in Brooklyn in 1952 and studied at Columbia College, Balliol College, Oxford, and Harvard University. He is the literary editor of The New Republic. *His book,* Nuclear War, Nuclear Peace, *was published in 1983. He lives in Washington.*

New York "for several decades . . . the artistic capital of the Western world"? When, exactly? The "Western world" is a big place. Moreover, I'm not sure that art has a capital, or needs a capital; nor that places (or decades) are terribly useful categories for the understanding of why the interior life of certain men and women develops as it does, and turns outward into expression. A writer may be influenced decisively by ideas, and a painter by images, far away in space and time. And writers and artists will always want to protect themselves from their surroundings, to resist their interferences and impositions (which may also take the form of "high culture"). Perhaps the most that a place can offer the writer and the artist is a decent isolation.

Alas, the isolation that New York now offers is indecent. A young man or woman who chose to become a poet or a painter or a composer or a dancer or a translator always needed courage; but never the quantity of courage this city now demands. For a start, there is the vast material injustice of the city, the cost of its cost of living. A decent poverty, too, is now impossible. South of, say, 125th Street, there is almost not a roof for anybody earning in the low to middle five figures. It is an old Manhattan joke, that its inhabitants talk of nothing so much as real estate. But there is a dark side to "development," to all the smart interest in prices and profits. Listen to the starting-out talk about "real estate" and you hear despair. Of course, the move to Hoboken or Long Island City or Brooklyn (not Brooklyn Heights, but Brooklyn depths) may hold a hidden blessing: these people will learn how easily and profoundly one may live away from the frantic island. Still, the move is generally felt as an exile, as a demoralization.

These young people (who are not, all of them, particularly young; nor are the propertied masses of the city particularly old) are correct to hear in the great commercial din of the city an invitation for them to leave. The problem is not only that New York is expensive. Many places are expensive. The problem, rather, is that New York has granted money a most undeserved cultural prestige. There used to be glamour in being brilliant but broke. No more. If you're broke, you lack local ontology. The streets of Manhattan now remind me, almost every time I traverse them, of what the streets of London said to one of Jean Rhys's crushed heroines: "Get money, get money, get money, or forever be damned." The Manhattan ideal of life, in short, is a material deal.

The editors of this journal will pardon me for bringing the problem a little uncordially closer to home. I cannot understand how anybody who cares deeply about the vitality of intellectual and imaginative life in New York can look uncritically on capitalism's recent ravages upon it. For that has been one of the real cultural consequences of the city's economic glory. To be sure, not its only cultural consequence; the academic and artistic institutions of the city have benefited handsomely from the cultural credentializings of some of America's largest corporations, and, if you correct for such vulgarities as most of the "blockbuster" museum shows, so have its citizens. And yet I wonder whether a few drawings by Oskar Schlemmer in the lobby of the IBM Building are worth the discouragement of a generation. The

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

metropolitan conservative must recognize that the occasion for his anxiety is the dejection of culture in an overwhelmingly commercial environment. It is a contradiction that goes to the heart of that tendency that glibly marries high culture to high capitalism, and offers congratulations. I remain puzzled by all the little Eliots whose imitation of the master (*imitatio T. E.*) fails to include his alarm about the social and cultural shortcomings of capitalism. Obviously I am not recommending a medievalism on Madison. But for the history of art and society the situation in Manhattan is interesting precisely for what light it may shed upon the cultural ambiguities of "growth."

Nor is that all. The prosperity of New York has had the effect of thinning experience in the city, of diminishing its historically unequalled promise of surprise, of reducing the range of what awaits the *flaneur*. More streets in Manhattan are like more streets in Manhattan than ever before; and the same is true of its people. The city now seems to be composed of a middle class and an underclass. (I omit the rich, who are eternal.) To be sure, a great deal of experience and surprise awaits the *flaneur* along Lenox Avenue; but you didn't used to have to risk your life for a break from the bourgeois. And of course there is much that is valuable in the new embourgoisement, as there was in the old. Still, it has the weaknesses of its strengths, and most intolerable among them are the homogenization and the regulation of experience. The most damning documents of what prosperity has done to the city, culturally and existentially, are Woody Allen's movies. There is not a frame of his recent films that is not premised on privilege. They demonstrate, with unintended brilliance, the poverty of taste, of urbanity, of a life in which nothing is any longer raw, in which there is no longer any appetite for the Other.

Allen's films demonstrate, too, a popular metropolitan mistake, which is the confusion between the creation of culture and the consumption of culture. New York remains the capital of cultural consumption. There are pictures to be seen there and music to be heard there that can be seen and heard nowhere else; and as long as the City Ballet remains in New York, the world outside New York will remain the provinces. While I would not want to live in Manhattan, I would not want to live too far from it, either. It is impossible to deny, moreover, that the consumption of culture has a role in the creation of culture. There is a kind of "consumption" that makes the soul start. And yet the cultural life of New York is

"The problem . . . is that New York has granted money a most undeserved cultural prestige. There used to be glamour in being brilliant but broke. No more. If you're broke, you lack local ontology."

riddled with a mad spirit of consumerism, and with its indomitable machinery of publicity and public relations. This must have a dampening and derailing effect. For one thing, it makes shock more or less impossible. Everything, every book or painting or poem, is interpreted immediately; it is seen—where is the critic who will say, "I don't know yet?"—and swiftly assimilated into a trend or a career. (Advice to the artist who thinks that he may have done something really new: stay away from the "Arts and Leisure" section of the *Times* as if your life depends on it.) Of course, there is nothing that public relations can do to a masterpiece and nothing, ultimately, that it can do for it; imagine a publicity release for *Lord Weary's Castle* or *Concerto Barocco,* and the comedy is clear. But there are so few masterpieces and so many publicity releases.

The editors ask if I could work in New York. A few years ago I came to the conclusion that as a writer I could not, and for the most ironic of reasons. Rich or poor, it is the sheer volume of intellectual and artistic life in New York that would defeat me. I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cannot quite collect myself among all the agitation and animation, all the successes and failures, all the scandals and emergencies, all the circles and gangs and cliques and schools, all the shallow loves and deep hatreds, all the gossip, all the self-importance, all the power. The literary community of New York seems to be in a permanent state of hysteria. I find this, and the grandiosity of the parochialism peculiar to Manhattan, a little confirmed in the editors' statement. How exactly is a "threat to New York's position" a threat to nothing less than culture? What is so important, or so imperative, about the "dominance" of a particular place, from the standpoint of art? Why should anybody care about a transformation in the manner of making "reputation" and "establishing critical renown"? Reputations made in New York were never reputations made in marble.

In New York there is simply too much to have positions about. And positions, in New York, are required. And I have watched too many brilliant people squander their minds on position-taking. (I mean position-taking about culture; in politics, position-taking is a more legitimate and primary activity.) What New York most threatens me with, in the end, is what I can only call a crippling feeling of contemporaneity. Serious work has always been done precisely in the opposite feeling, by writers and artists who felt out of their time and out of their place, and it is not Romantic sentimentality to say so. (I have no alienation envy; I am alienated quite enough.) If I do serious work, it will be slowly, softly, according to my intention only, for the pleasure of those with the same intention and for a glimpse at things that do not pass, and alone. Those are not the traits of a New Yorker.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

KURT SCHWITTERS, *Merz 275 (Leuna)*, 1921

EXPRESSIONISTS, CONSTRUCTIVISTS, SURREALISTS, AND ARTISTS OF THE BAUHAUS AND DADA PERIOD

Helen Serger la boetie, inc.
9 East 82nd Street New York 10028 Tel. (212) 535-4865

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TOM KENNY

PAINTINGS AND WORK ON PAPER
JULY 12–AUGUST 24

Artist In The Studio: Rome, 1986, Oil and Charcoal On Linen, 60″ × 110″

queens museum

The Queens Museum
New York City Building
Flushing Meadow–Corona Park
Flushing, NY 11368
(718) 592-5555

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CONNIE FOX

9 September - 4 October 1986

INGBER GALLERY
415 W. Broadway New York

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MAURICE ENGLISH POETRY AWARD

JUROR: 1986 AWARD **WILLIAM STAFFORD**

FIRST RECIPIENT, 1985: JANE COOPER
PUBLICATION: *SCAFFOLDING*
(London, UK: Anvil Poetry Press, 1984)

JUROR: 1985 AWARD **GALWAY KINNELL**

This award will be presented annually to an author in his or her sixth (or beyond) decade of life for a distinguished book of poems published during the preceding calendar year. It responds to the fact that a body of work by Maurice English did not appear in book form until his 55th year. The Maurice English Poetry Award carries an honorarium of $1,000 and a request for a public reading in Philadelphia. It is given in tribute to his work by his family.

1986 Award Winner to be announced

MAURICE ENGLISH POETRY AWARD
c/o HELEN DRUTT GALLERY
1721 WALNUT STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103

MODERN JEWELRY, 1964-1986:
THE HELEN WILLIAMS DRUTT COLLECTION

PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART
NOVEMBER 2, 1986 — JANUARY 4, 1987

CLEVELAND INSTITUTE OF ART
SEPTEMBER 5 - 30, 1986

HONOLULU ACADEMY OF ARTS
JANUARY 22 — MARCH 9, 1986

CHÂTEAU DUFRESNE
MONTREAL MUSEUM OF DECORATIVE ARTS
NOVEMBER 15, 1984 — FEBRUARY 3, 1985

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

RUBINOFF

June 19-September 25, 1986
Art Gallery of York University
Toronto, Canada

Jeffrey Rubinoff
Sculptures 1983-85
A travelling exhibition

For information
call Dr David Burnett
(416) 483 2900

Tofino #1 1985 Cor-ten plate Height 7'3"

LICENSED TO WIKI.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ALICE TRUMBULL MASON

JOHN McLAUGHLIN

Two Decades: 1950 & 1960

WASHBURN

42 East 57 Street, New York (212) 753-0546

The New Criterion
850 Seventh Avenue
Suite 503
New York NY 10019

Second Class Postage
Paid at New York, NY
and at additional
Mailing Offices

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED